REPORT

ON THE

ADMINISTRATION

OF THE

PROVINCE OF ASSAM

FOR THE

YEAR 1877-78.

SHILLONG:
PRINTED AT THE ASSAM SECRETARIAT PRESS.

1878.

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PART I.

GENERAL SUMMARY

Seasons and harvests.

THE year was on the whole a favourable one to the agriculturist. In some districts, owing to an unseasonable rainfall, the *sali* rice crop partially failed, but this partial failure was counterbalanced by the abundant yield of the *aus* rice crop. On the whole, however, both these crops gave a fair outturn, and the yield of the other crops was not below the average. The rainfall during the year was somewhat unequally distributed: in the Brahmaputra Valley it was below, while in the Surmá Valley and in the hill districts it was above, the average.

Condition of the people.

2. The general condition of the people throughout the year appears to have been as prosperous as usual. The high prices of food-grains which generally prevailed were a result of extraneous circumstances; they were by no means an indication of local scarcity or distress.

Health of the people.

3. The public health throughout the year was generally fair, but cholera in an epidemic form visited the districts of Sylhet, Káámrúp, Nowgong, and Darrang. In the latter district there was an especially severe outbreak of this disease, carrying off 2,204 persons. There were the usual number of deaths from malarious fevers. Small-pox prevailed in some districts. The vital statistics, being untrustworthy, throw no light on the general health of the people.

Changes in Administration.

4. No general administrative change of any importance took place during the year. The creation of the post of Inspector-General of Police and Prisons, and Commissioner of Abkari Revenue and Superintendent of Stamps, was, through inadvertence, not alluded to in last year's report, and may therefore be mentioned here, although the appointment was constituted before the close of 1876-77.

Under the head of "Political changes," the principal occurrence to be noted is the suspension, temporarily, for the period of a year, of the provisions of the Inner Line Regulation in regard to that portion of the Darrang Inner Line which faces the Towang country. This was done at the request of the Bhutia chiefs on the other side of the border, who complained that the restrictions of the Regulation were a serious impediment to their intercourse and trade with the people of the plains.

Neither of the two remaining sub-divisions in Sylhet was opened during the year, but a site for the head-quarters of the Latu sub-division was fixed upon at Karimganj, and orders to commence building operations were issued. The selection of the site for the head-quarters of the Habiganj sub-division was unavoidably postponed. Both of these sub-divisions have since been opened.

The long-standing dispute concerning the boundary between the district of Goálpára and the Gáro Hills, in which the zemindars had filed suits against Government in the Civil Court claiming large sums as compensation, was at last set at rest by a compromise and mutual agreement, according to which the newly-defined boundary is maintained, and the disputed lands, though recognized as the property of the zemindars, are left principally under Government management.

Among other proceedings for the revision of boundaries may be mentioned the completion of the demarcation of the boundary between the Gáro Hills and Mymensingh, the notification of the boundary between the Gáro Hills and the Khási Hills, the revision of the boundary between the districts of Rangpur and Goálpára, and the re-arrangement of the thannah divisions in Goálpára.

Relations with tributary States and frontier affairs.

5. The chief event of the year in connection with the State of Manipur was the despatch to Tipaimukh by the Manipur Durbar of a

deputation authorized by the Maharajah to enter into negotiations with the Lushais, with a view to induce them to refrain from attacking certain Nága villages situated in Manipur territory. The deputation, however, was of a most informal character, and the negotiations came to nothing.

The question concerning the disputed boundary between Manipur and British territory, which had been pending for several years, was settled satisfactorily during the year under report.

The behaviour of the Manipuri détenus kept under surveillance at Sylhet was good throughout the year.

With the exception of the Angámi Nágas, our relations with the various tribes on this frontier were peaceable, and, on the whole, afforded no ground for disquiet. The hillmen attended during the year the several large annual fairs which are held mainly with a view to cultivate friendly relations with them, and their behaviour while in the plains was, with the exception of the Kapas Chor Akas and some thieving Nágas, good.

Though the Abors made no overtly hostile demonstrations during the year, their manner was, as formerly, insolent and overbearing, and they have boldly asserted claims, which are altogether inadmissible, to land lying in the plains.

In last year's report it was stated that a punitive expedition was to be despatched during the cold weather of 1877-78, to inflict punishment on the Angámi Nága village of Mozema for a raid committed on the British Nága village of Gumaigáju in North Cachar. The expedition accordingly left Samaguting on the 6th December, 1877, and on the 8th idem Mozema was carried by assault. The Mozema men, on being driven out of their village, dispersed through the neighbouring hills and jungles, and some desultory fighting ensued; but finally they made overtures for peace, and terms, on the whole satisfactory, were imposed upon them. The objects of the expedition were, to a great extent, attained.

Surveys.

6. Parties of the Topographical, Trigonometrical, and Revenue Surveys were employed in the Province during the year. The main work of the Topographical Survey party lay in the Miri Hills, on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, and in the Mishmi Hills at the head of the Brahmaputra Valley. In the Miri Hills, operations were carried on in conjunction with the Trigonometrical Survey party, one of the chief objects of the exploration

being to ascertain the true course and origin of the Subansiri river, and the possibility of its connection with the Sanpo river in Thibet. The united party, under Lieutenants Harman and Woodthorpe, penetrated to the second range of hills, no obstacle on the part of the inhabitants being met with. The principal difficulty was in obtaining supplies and carriage, the population being very scanty and miserably poor, barely able apparently to support themselves. As, however, the orders of Government prohibited the further advance of the party, the question as to the upper course of the river could not be satisfactorily settled; but observations were made which will materially help in the elucidation of the problem. In the Mishmi Hills and the country at their base, valuable explorations were made by Lieutenant Woodthorpe and his party, which, should further investigations be made in this direction of a route to Western China or Upper Burmah, will be found of much importance.

The Trigonometrical Survey, besides their work in the Miri Hills, completed the remainder of their series of triangulations in the head of the Assam Valley, and the party was then withdrawn.

The Revenue Survey party continued the demarcation and adjustment of la-kheraj and nisf-kheraj holdings in Kámrúp, on which it is still engaged. The progress of this work towards completion is very far from satisfactory. The work is to some extent, perhaps, unavoidably tedious, but it is hoped that under orders recently issued a greater degree of rapidity may be attained in the future.

During the years 1875-76 and 1876-77, a survey was undertaken in the Dikhu Valley and the adjacent coal-fields by a party detached from the Northern Bengal State Railway. The object of the survey was to examine the practicability of connecting the Dikhu coal-fields with the Brahmaputra. The result was reported in the course of the year, and the alternative projects recommended will be found in the body of the report.

Settlements.

7. During the year under review progress was made in the re-settlement of ilam estates in Sylhet, the re-settlement of other petty scattered estates in that district, the re-settlement of the Jaintiá pergunnahs, the settlement of waste lands in Cachar, the re-settlement of the Eastern Duars in Goálpára, petty re-settlements in that district, and the ordinary annual settlements in Assam Proper.

The cost and rate of progress, both of the ilam settlements and of the settlement of the other petty estates in Sylhet, during the year were not altogether satisfactory. Good progress was, however, made during the year in the re-settlement of the Jaintiá pergunnahs,—the measurement of the remaining pergunnahs having been completed, and the re-settlement of the tenures in six pergunnahs having been nearly completed before the close of the year. The work of re-settlement at first progressed but slowly, owing to the opposition of the ryots; but, on the Settlement Officer adopting coercive measures, the obstruction collapsed. The rates of assessment already approved for the above-noted six pergunnahs will be applied to the remaining eleven pergunnahs. The re-settlement of these remaining pergunnahs will, it is hoped, be speedily completed.

The settlement work in Cachar consisted of the settlement of waste lands under the Mirasdari Rules obtaining in the district, and calls for no notice in particular here.

The re-settlement of the Eastern Duars, in the Goálpára district, has been completed. The system adopted has been that of direct settlement with the cultivator, and this has been approved by the Government of India in the case of three out of five of the Duars. Whether this system should finally be adopted in Duars Bijni and Sidli, is still under the Supreme Government's consideration. The revision of settlement of these Duars has resulted in a net increase of Rs. 28,490 annual revenue.

The re-settlement of the petty estates in Goálpára calls for no notice here.

The ordinary annual settlements in Assam Proper resulted in an increase of revenue of Rs. 72,088 over the revenue of the previous year. This increase was due to extension of cultivation.

Waste lands.

8. 161 leases, covering an area of 71,646 acres, were sold during the year under the Thirty-years' Lease Rules, against 63 leases, covering an area of 24,441 acres, sold in the preceding year. The Chief Commissioner has every reason to believe that these rules are well suited to the conditions of the Province, and are favourable to the extension of the tea industry.

In addition to the above, a total area of 26,214·51 acres was taken up during the year for the cultivation of tea under the

ordinary cultivation leases. Of this area, no less than 20,355 acres were taken up in Cachar.

Wards' estates.

9. The estates under the management of the Court of Wards during the year were the same as in the previous year, *viz.*, the Sidli estate, Har Kumar Pal's estate, and the estate of the minor Gulam Arinani.

The particulars of these estates require no special notice in this place.

Police.

10. The working of the police force throughout the year was satisfactory, and the general conduct of the men was, on the whole, good. Much improvement was effected during the year in the condition of the village police in Sylhet, and the re-organization of the village police in Goálpára was undertaken. The river patrol system in Sylhet worked well, as also the system of regular police patrol along the Assam Trunk Road. Much attention was paid during the year to the discipline and drill of the force.

The number of cognizable offences reported during the year was slightly in excess of the number of such cases reported in 1876, but the number of cases accepted as true was less than in the previous year. Such decrease, if the result of a real decrease of crime, may be deemed satisfactory. The result of the cases sent up by the police was much the same as in the preceding year.

From the figures given in the body of the report, there appears to have been a decrease of crime in the hill districts during the year under review, as compared with the previous year.

Prisons.

11. The state of the jail buildings in the Province varied but little during the year, though a considerable sum was expended upon their repairs. A step was made, in the reduction of the Goálpára Jail to the condition of a lock-up, towards a policy of abolishing the smaller jails, and massing the prison population in large central jails.

The proportion of foreigners amongst the prisoners in jail during the year amounted to nearly 12 per cent. of the gross prison population; nearly 9 per cent. were imported labourers on tea-gardens.

The percentage of prisoners sentenced to rigorous imprisonment was higher than in the preceding year, a decidedly satisfactory fact.

Considering the insecure state of many of the jail buildings, the escapes during the year may be said to have been very few.

There was a slight increase in the number of offences against prison discipline, as compared with the preceding year. Much attention was paid during the year to the development of the mark system, and the rules regarding classification were carried out as far as practicable.

The net cost of each prisoner to the State during the year was in excess of the cost in 1876. This increase was mainly due to the large expenditure on jail buildings, and is therefore only temporary.

There was an improvement in the health of the prisoners during the year, both the percentage of sick on average strength and the percentage of deaths on average strength being lower than in the preceding year. The sanitary arrangements of the jails continue to be satisfactory.

Criminal justice.

12. As compared with the previous year, there was a decrease both in the number of offences reported and in the number of persons convicted during the year under review. The result of the trials before the court of session was decidedly satisfactory, as compared with the result of such trials in 1876; but, with the exception of the courts of district magistrates, the result of the trials in the courts of magistrates was less favourable than in the preceding year. There is little to note here under this head.

Civil Justice.

13. There was an increase during the year in civil business, as compared with 1876, the number of suits instituted being 21,282, against 19,429 in the previous year. The increase occurred entirely in Sylhet, there having been a decrease in the number of institutions in the Valley districts and in Cachar. This decrease is attributable to various causes. The number of cases disposed of during the year was greater than in the preceding year.

The amount in litigation in the civil courts of the Province during the year was Rs. 16,77,750, against Rs. 35,05,382 in 1876. The decrease is very marked; but it occurred altogether in the Valley districts, principally in

Goálpára, and is due to the special series of cases instituted during the previous year in that district. Of the suits disposed of, eleven only exceeded Rs. 5,000 in value. There was an increase both in cases of the small cause court class and in rent suits.

The ratio of civil suits to population in the Province during the year under report was 5 per cent.

No other points call for notice here.

Registration.

14. There was a marked increase in the work of the Registration Department during the year under review, 12,312 documents having been registered, as compared with 9,004 documents registered in 1876-77, showing an increase in the total number of registrations of 37 per cent. The receipts during the year, and also the expenditure, were, consequent upon the increase in the number of documents, greater than in the preceding year. There were only two deficit districts during the year, as compared with three such districts in 1876-77. There was a very marked increase, more than 54 per cent., in the number of compulsory registrations, as compared with the previous year. These results must be considered as entirely satisfactory.

The number of registration offices remained the same as in the preceding year. No extension of the rural sub-registry system is at present contemplated.

Municipalities.

15. One addition was made to the municipal institutions of the Province during the year under report; the station of Dibrugarh having been declared a township under Act VI. of 1868 (B.C.) from the commencement of the year.

There was an increase in both receipts and expenditure on account of municipalities, as compared with the previous year due mainly to the increase in the number of municipalities. No works of any importance were carried out during the year, but the ordinary petty works undertaken by municipalities received due attention.

Agriculture and Horticulture.

16. Experimental sowings of wheat, barley, and oats were, as in the previous year, made at the Shillong Model Farm, and sowings were also made at a lower elevation. The agricultural experiments at the Shillong Farm have mostly been unsuccessful, and, financially speaking, the institution is a failure.

Forests.

17. The Forest Department continued to display much activity during the year under report. An area of 72·37 square miles was added to the Government forest reserves. In addition, large areas of forest were inspected, demarcated, and reported on, with the view to their being declared forest reserves. The work of demarcating forest boundaries was pushed vigorously on, and valuation surveys over an extensive area were carried out. An area of 689·80 square miles was gazetted during the year as "open forests." The measures taken to protect the forests from jungle fires were especially successful, and this success was in no slight measure due to the co-operation of the country people with the officers of the department in the work of fire protection. The experimental plantations started in previous years made much real progress during the year under review. Finally, the financial results of the working of the forest Department during the year were decidedly satisfactory. The receipts amounted to Rs. 1,34,325-11-3, and the expenditure to Rs. 1,00,286-8-8, leaving at the close of the year a surplus of Rs. 34,039-2-7. It will be difficult for some time to come to cut down forest expenditure in Assam. The department is still in need of much development, but the total forest receipts may be confidently expected to show a yearly progressing increase.

Trade.

18. It was stated in last year's report that arrangements had been made for the first time during that year to register the trade between this Province and Frontier States. These arrangements remained unaltered during the year under review. According to the returns received, the total value of the articles imported during the year into Assam was Rs. 7,34,246, and the total value of the articles exported from the Province Rs. 2,47,950. These figures, however, cannot be considered to be trustworthy, as there are many almost insuperable difficulties in the way of collecting trade statistics in this Province, and the means available for the collection are most inadequate. The trade itself is of a petty character, and very limited.

Public Works.

19. The final grant for the year to the Public Works Department amounted to Rs. 9,28,568, and the total expenditure during the year came to Rs. 8,85,670, leaving a surplus at the close of the

year of Rs. 42,898. As will be seen from the body of the report, the outturn of work of the department during the year was considerable. The principal works commenced or continued by the department during the year were the substitution of permanent roofs of iron or shingle for the thatch-roofs of the district cutcherries, the completion of the new court-houses at Dibrugarh and Shillong, the extension of the Sylhet jail, the completion of the new workshop at Gauháti, and the advancement of the Assam Trunk Road, the Shillong Cart-road, and the Sylhet and Cachar Road; the drainage operations in the station of Gauháti were also begun.

General Revenue.

20. The gross receipts of the Province during the year under review on account of Imperial and Provincial Services and Local and Municipal Funds amounted to Rs. 84,46,293. The net receipts for the year amounted to Rs. 72,62,714, against Rs. 66,60,900 in the preceding year, showing a net increase during the year under review of Rs. 6,01,814. The total expenditure during the year amounted to Rs. 47,40,867, and there was thus at the close of the year a net surplus of Rs. 25,21,847, against a surplus of Rs. 20,44,477 at the close of the previous year, showing an improvement during the year under report of Rs. 4,77,370. Of the total net increase in receipts, the major portion (Rs. 5,83,628) occurred under the head of "Imperial Services;" of this important increase, however, Rs. 60,600 are owing to certain corrective transfer-book entries, and the increase to this extent is nominal. Land revenue, Forests, and Excise show a real net increase of Rs. 4,76,824. A considerable portion, however (upwards of one lakh), of the increase under "Land revenue" is, as explained in the body of the report, due to a change in the date on which the last instalment of land revenue is collected in the Sylhet district, and is unreal. The remainder of the net increase under "Imperial Services" is a real increase, due to the administrative progress of the Province. For further details, the body of the report must be referred to.

Land Revenue.

21. The current demand for the year on account of ordinary land revenue was Rs. 31,50,446, against Rs. 30,30,994, the current demand for the previous year. The increase, Rs. 1,19,452, is due to settlements at progressive rates, to re-settlements at enhanced rates, to assessment of Old Assam Rule grants, and to extension of cultivation.

The current demand for the year on account of miscellaneous land revenue amounted to Rs. 2,52,863, against Rs. 2,23,650 in the preceding year, showing an increase of Rs. 29,213. This increase occurred mainly under the heads of "Elephants," " Fisheries," and "House-tax."

Opium.

22. The system of putting up to auction the licenses for the retail vend of opium within certain prescribed limits was introduced into all the districts of the Province at the commencement of the year under report with results which appear very favourable. While there has been a general falling off in the consumption of the drug, and in the number of shops for its retail vend, there has been a considerable increase in the revenue derived from it, which amounted to Rs. 12,98,051 during the year under report, against Rs. 12,16,712 in the preceding year. If from the above total revenue for each year the cost of conveying opium be deducted, the net revenue for the year comes to Rs. 12,83,940, as compared with Rs. 12,01,393 in 1876-77, showing a net increase during the year under review of Rs. 79,547. This rate, however, is not likely to be maintained.

The total gross revenue from opium and its preparations (madat and chandu) for the whole Province amounted during the year under report to Rs. 13,05,413, against Rs. 12,21,871 in 1876-77, showing an increase of Rs. 83,542 in 1877-78.

Excise.

23. The gross excise revenue of the year from all sources, excluding opium and its preparations, which have been dealt with separately, was Rs. 2,31,302, against Rs. 2,01,258 in the previous year, showing a total gross increase of Rs. 30,044. There was an increased revenue under all heads except "Rum," which shows a slight decrease of Rs. 71 only. The bulk of the increase was contributed by country spirits and ganja, and is attributable to the further extension of the farming system during the year. Deducting the charges of the department from the gross revenue of each of the years under comparison, as shown above, the net excise revenue for the year under report comes to Rs. 2,22,699, against Rs. 1,88,858 in 1876-77, showing a total net increase of Rs. 33,846 during 1877-78. This result is

decidedly satisfactory, the more so, as under the two principal heads the number of retail licenses granted fell off considerably during the year.

Stamps.

24. The gross revenue from stamps during the year under report, excluding the receipts from the sale of postage, service, and telegraph stamps, amounted to Rs. 5,48,173, against Rs. 4,87,332 in the preceding year, or an increase of Rs. 60,841, and Rs. 4,89,356, the average of the three previous years. Thus, the revenue from general and court-fees stamps exhibits a most satisfactory increase, as compared with previous years. The receipts from general stamps alone have risen 20 per cent. over the revenue from this source in the preceding year. This increase in the revenue from general stamps is especially satisfactory, and may reasonably be attributed to a proportionate increase in monetary and commercial transactions, and partly, also, to the measures adopted to prevent evasions of the stamp laws. Deducting the charges of the department from the total gross revenue, the total net revenue for the year under report comes to Rs. 5,36,828, as compared with Rs. 4,77,013 in the preceding year, showing a net increase in the revenue of the year of Rs. 59,815, or nearly 13 per cent.

The receipts from the sale of postage, service, and telegraph stamps during the year under review amounted, respectively, to Rs. 73,619, Rs. 17,481, and Rs. 42,396. The corresponding figures for 1876-77 are Rs. 62,590, Rs. 16,599, and Rs. 26,468. The increase in the sales of postage stamps is especially satisfactory. The increased sale of service stamps is owing to an increase in official correspondence. The increased receipts from the sale of telegraph stamps are the natural result of the extension of the telegraph line to Upper Assam.

Revenue and finance other than Imperial.

25. The receipts and charges for the year under "Provincial Services" were, respectively, Rs. 16,78,921 and Rs. 16,43,246, leaving a surplus of Rs. 35,675. This surplus, being added to the balance at the beginning of the year, makes up the amount at credit of the Local Administration to Rs. 1,52,649.

Local Funds.

26. The details of the several Local Funds are given in the body of the report, and there is nothing to be noted here, save that at the close of the year all the funds were solvent, the aggregate balance being Rs. 1,91,309.

Births and deaths.

27. The vital statistics given in the body of the report are, the Chief Commissioner considers, utterly untrustworthy and the deductions from them ludicrous; so they will not be reproduced here.

Immigration.

28. The figures given in the body of the report show a very considerable increase in the immigrant population of the Province during the year under review. At the commencement of 1877 there were 135,807 immigrants in the Province; during the year 86,712 souls were added to the immigrant population: thus, the total number of immigrants employed in the Province during the year was 222,519, as compared with 190,358, the total number employed in the previous year. The total number of immigrants removed from the books during the year was 65,300, and thus the total number remaining in the Province at the end of the year was 157,219, showing an increase in the immigrant population of the Province of 21,412 souls. The death-rate and desertion-rate (calculated on average strength) during 1877 were, respectively, 5·09 and 4·48 per cent., the corresponding figures for 1876 are 5·02 and 6·16 per cent.

A very large number of immigrants, as compared with previous years, entered the Province during the year under report, *viâ* the Dhubri and Rajmehal route.

Many questions in connection with the well-being of immigrants came under discussion during the year under review, of which full notice will be found in the body of the report. On the whole, the condition of the immigrant population of the Province affords cause for congratulation. The labourers are invariably well treated and well cared for by their employers, and are, in the main, contented with their lot. The point in connection with immigration which now chiefly demands the attention of the Local Administration is the removal of existing difficulties in the way of the transport of labourers, and the consequent cheapening of labour to the employer.

Medical relief.

29. The number of dispensaries in the Province was increased by one during the year under review, but the total number of patients treated in these dispensaries was less during the year than during the preceding year,—the decrease was, however, slight. There was a marked decrease in the number of major operations,

and a slight decrease in the number of minor operations performed during the year, as compared with the previous year.

The financial results of the working of the dispensaries during the year were not unsatisfactory; but these institutions are not popular, nor are they so useful as similar institutions are in other provinces.

Lunatic Asylums.

30. There is only one Lunatic Asylum in the Province,—the Tezpur Asylum.

The buildings are still merely of a temporary nature and have undergone but little change; but attention was paid during the year to improving the drainage of the site. The question of erecting permanent buildings is under consideration.

The expenditure in relation to the number of patients is unavoidably very high.

Sanitation.

31. There is little to note under this head. The drainage of the town of Gauháti was the only sanitary work deserving of the name undertaken during the year.

Vaccination.

32. Vaccination operations in this Province are still of a limited nature, and the total number of persons, in proportion to the population, annually protected, is but small. The vaccinators meet with much passive obstruction, though in some districts, notably in Kámrúp, vaccination has made much progress. Until circle establishments can be properly organized throughout Assam, small-pox will never receive any effectual check.

Education.

33. The Education Department was, the Chief Commissioner considers, worked with fair success during the year under review.

There was an increase of 42 schools, and of 2,451 pupils, as compared with the preceding year. This increase, both in the number of schools and pupils, was mainly under the head "Primary Instruction," but the other stages of instruction exhibit a progressive element. The progress made by female education is specially satisfactory.

The normal schools did much useful work during the year.

On the whole, the position of the department improved much during the past year.

PART II. A.

PERMANENT CHAPTERS.

See Administration Report for 1874-75 and 1875-76, Part II.A.

PART II. B.

ADMINISTRATION REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1877-78.

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CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY.

SECTION 1.—CHANGES IN ADMINISTRATION.

Creation of the appointment of Inspector-General of Police and Prisons, and Commissioner of Abkari Revenue and Superintendent of Stamps.

1. (*a*) *General.*—Mention was omitted in last year's report of one administrative change, of by no means an unimportant character, *viz.*, the creation of the post of Inspector-General of Police and Prisons, and Commissioner of Abkari Revenue and Superintendent of Stamps.

The appointment of a special officer to supervise these departments of the Administration having been determined on by the Government of India, Mr. T. J. Chichele-Plowden, C.S., was, in October, 1876, nominated to the post, and joined his appointment; but very shortly afterwards he was appointed to officiate as Under-Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, and Captain W. J. Williamson, Deputy-Commissioner of the Gáro Hills, was, in March, 1877, appointed to officiate in his place. The necessity for this appointment has been fully justified by the results in the closer supervision now practicable over the details of the working of these departments.

Cachar Inner Line.

2. (*b*) *Political.*—The demarcation of the Cachar Inner Line has been finished, and a revised notification, slightly modifying the line previously laid down, has been published.

Darrang Inner Line.

3. During the year the Chief Commissioner sanctioned the temporary suspension, for the period of one year, of the provisions of the Inner Line Regulation in regard to that part of the Darrang Inner Line which faces the Towang

country. The suspension was duly notified in the *Gazette*, and approved by the Government of India. This measure was taken in compliance with the request of the Bhutias, who found their trading intercourse with the plains much impeded by the Regulation, and desired that all restrictions on the plains people crossing the frontier should be removed.

Sub-divisions in Sylhet.

4. (*c*) *Administrative.*—It was found impracticable to open, as was hoped, the two remaining new sub-divisions in Sylhet during the year. A site, however, for the Latu sub-division was finally fixed on at Karimganj, and permission given for the erection of the necessary buildings.

Further inquiry and actual experience of the locality were thought necessary before determining on the position to be selected for the Habiganj head-quarters.

Both these sub-divisions have been opened since the close of the year under report.

Rules under Land Improvement Act.

5. Certain rules framed by the Chief Commissioner, with the sanction of the Governor-General in Council, under Section 81 of the Land Improvement Act of 1871, were notified under date the 16th November, 1877.

Rules under Court-fees Act.

6. Revised Rules under Clause 1, Section 20, of the Court-fees Act of 1870, framed by the High Court, were confirmed by the Chief Commissioner, with the previous sanction of the Supreme Government, and were notified for general observance under date the 5th March, 1878.

Garo Hills and Mymensingh boundary.

7. (*d*) *Revision of district and internal boundaries.*—The demarcation of the boundary between the Gáro Hills and Mymensingh, which was surveyed specially in the season of 1875-76, has been completed.

Garo and Khási Hills boundary.

8. The boundary between the Gáro Hills and the Khási Hills was approved of by the Government of India during the year, and was duly notified on the 3rd April, 1878.

Rangpur-Goálpára boundary.

9. The boundary between the districts of Rangpur and Goálpára has been revised, and the joint report of the officers deputed on the work is now under the consideration of the Government of India.

Revision of thannah boundaries in Goálpara.

10. The thannah divisions in the district of Goálpára were rearranged by a notification in the *Gazette* dated 12th July, 1877.

Gáro Hills and Goálpára boundary.

11. It was stated in para. 11 of last year's report that negotiations were in progress for adjusting the claims of the Goálpára zemindars, who had instituted civil suits against Government to contest the validity of the proceedings for the demarcation of the boundary between the districts of Goálpára and the Gáro Hills, which had been taken in 1874 under Act XXII. of 1869.

Terms of mutual arrangement were finally agreed on between the Deputy-Commissioner of Goálpára and the parties concerned, and the suits have been withdrawn. The boundary as demarcated by Mr. Beckett has now been finally accepted, certain rights of the zemindars within that boundary having been secured, and this long-standing dispute is now at last at rest.

SECTION 2.—RELATIONS WITH TRIBUTARY STATES AND FRONTIER AFFAIRS.

TRIBUTARY STATES.—MANIPUR.

12. The chief event in connection with the relations between this Administration and the dependent State of Manipur that occurred during the year was the solicitation of the Chief Commissioner's good offices on the part of the Maharajah in carrying out some negotiations between the Manipur Durbar and the Lushais. Some of the Nága tribes, known as the Kapui Nágas, residing within Manipur territory, in the neighbourhood of the main road from Cachar to Manipur, having suffered from repeated raids by the Lushais, and being apprehensive of further inroads, applied to the Maharajah of Manipur for permission to proceed to Tipaimukh and make peace with their enemies. The Maharaja having agreed to their proposal, a deputation, consisting of a Nága Senapati, an interpreter, and a Manipur subadar, was despatched to Tipaimukh, and, at the instance of the Maharajah, the Political Agent at Manipur requested that the Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar might be allowed to render assistance to the deputation. Colonel Keatinge, however, considering the despatch of a mission so ill-defined and unauthoritative both in its constitution and its objects a mistake, declined to permit the Deputy-Commissioner to take any part in the negotiations, although he would not prohibit the deputation from proceeding upon its own responsibility. Colonel Keatinge said that he could only take part in the proceedings if the Maharajah would assume the place of principal, and that the Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar could only act as a medium in the matter if the Maharajah would plainly state on paper the terms he proposed to make with the Lushais, and would formally engage that, in the event of any subsequent disputes arising as to the observance of the conditions, he would implicitly abide by the Chief Commissioner's decision in the matter. These orders were approved of by the Government of India. The Maharajah, however, failed to give any formal engagement. The deputation proceeded to Tipaimukh; but the action of the so-called delegates was characterized by duplicity, and the whole proceedings were of quite too informal a nature to admit of any proper understanding being come to between the Lushai chiefs and the Durbar. The deputation was productive of no good results, and the delegates were obliged to return to Manipur, leaving a message for the Lushais to the effect that, owing to the lateness of the season, a settlement was then impracticable.

The long-pending question concerning the boundary between Manipur and British territory in the direction of the Nága and North Cachar Hills was definitely settled during the year under report, and the arrangement entered into between the Political Agent and the Maharajah received the confirmation of the Government of India. It is a matter of satisfaction that this long-pending question has at last been finally set at rest.

The Chief Commissioner having learnt that a complete system of passports existed in Manipur, requested the Political Agent to report as to its application to British subjects. In reply, the Political Agent stated that passports are only given at the capital to people leaving the State; that passports for entering Manipur are given at Lakhipur. Every person who leaves Manipur is bound to furnish himself with a passport under pain of being stopped on the road and made to return. The amount paid varies with the side of exit. The following amounts are levied:—

For each Passport.

	As.	P.
To Lakhipur and Cachar	9	0
„ Burmah.....	10	6
„ Assam	9	4

No further action has been taken in the matter.

In January, 1877, the release of the Manipur détenu Kanai Singh, who is permitted to reside under surveillance, was applied for by one Kamal Singh, a relation. The Maharajah, however, on being referred to, replied that he would only consent to his release provided he was sent to Manipur. Such an arrangement being obviously equivalent to handing over Kanai Sing to perpetual imprisonment or some worse fate, the Chief Commissioner was clearly unable to accede to it, and accordingly declined to recommend the release of the détenu.

The two Manipuri détenus Shekor Singh and Nirjit Singh resided during the year under surveillance at Sylhet. Their behaviour was good.

The measures taken for the prevention of Nága raids on Manipur will be detailed in the para. treating of the affairs of the Nága Hills district.

Frontier Tribes.

13. As in former reports, the various frontier tribes with whom we have political relations will here be treated of in the order of their geographical position.

Bhutias.

14. Our relations with the Bhutias during the year were peaceful. The communications addressed in May, 1877, to the Deputy-Commissioner of Goálpára by the so-called Agent of the Deb Rajah concerning certain tolls, &c., and the action taken thereon was noticed in para. 14 of last year's report.

In November, 1877, information was sent to the Chief Commissioner by the military authorities that parties of armed Bhutias, headed by the Poonah Jongpen, who was in rebellion against the

Deb Rajah, had crossed the frontier near Buxa, but had been disarmed. As, however, all diplomatic relations with Bhután are carried on through the Commissioner of the Rajshahye Division, no further action was called for on the part of this Administration beyond forwarding the communication to the proper authority.

From the beginning to the end of March, 1878, the usual bands of Bhutia traders came down into the district of Darrang, and carried on a steady trade with the Kacharis and the Marwari and other merchants.

The Sáth Rajahs of Kariapára and Chárduár.

15. The Sáth Rajahs of Kariapára, the chiefs of the Towang Bhutias, paid a visit to the Deputy-Commissioner of Darrang at Udalguri on the 12th February, 1878, and had a prolonged interview with that officer, principally on the subject of the suspension of the Inner Line Regulation. This Regulation has since been suspended, in accordance with the Rajahs' wishes, in the case of natives of the district of Darrang only, in regard to that portion of the Inner Line fronting Towang.

The Rajahs further wished Colonel Sherer to pay them their pensions at Udalguri, so as to spare them the journey to Tezpur. This request the Deputy-Commissioner was unable to comply with, but he consented to pay the Rajahs their pensions at the Mangaldai sub-divisional head-quarters, where, accordingly, they were paid in open Durbar on the 20th February.

No allusion was made on this occasion by the Rajahs to the large weekly market held at Kalaigaon, to the holding of which they urged objections in the previous year as prejudicing their trading operations.

16. The Rajahs of Shergaon and Rupraigaon, commonly called the Sáth Rajahs of Chárduár, came down as usual to their annual trading post at Daimára, two miles due north of the boundary-line. They also came into Tezpur to receive their annual allowances, which were paid to them in open Durbar on the 6th February. The Rajahs reported that all was quiet in their own country, and expressed friendly feelings towards the British Government. They expressed themselves anxious for the suspension of the Inner Line Regulation as regards the portion fronting their territory, in order that our ryots, whom they engage on hire to carry grain, might be able to go up to Daimára and back, without having to take out a pass on each occasion. Colonel Sherer informed the Rajahs that if a duly-authenticated application was made from the constituted authorities across the border, as was done by the Sáth Rajahs of Kariapára, he would forward it for the orders of the Chief Commissioner, or, on their furnishing him with a list of the names of the porters they had engaged for the season, he would issue a general pass for these persons. This list was accordingly furnished by the Rajahs, and a general pass for the men was granted to them on the 8th February.

17. The Thebengia Bhutias, whose country lies to the east of Towang, came into the sudder station and received their pensions on the 12th March. They evinced, as usual, a thoroughly friendly spirit.

Bhutia Fairs.

18. As in previous years, arrangements were made beforehand for the accommodation of the Bhutias who come down to the large annual fairs. A sum of Rs. 300 was sanctioned for purposes in connection with the Udalguri fair, and good substantial buildings were erected at that place instead of the temporary huts which, hitherto, had been run up every year. These new lines are very much more commodious than the temporary huts, and will last, with slight repairs, for several years. In addition to the lines at Udalguri, a building was erected at Khagrapára for the accommodation of the Kerkaria Bhutias. On their arrival, a small space in the building was allotted to each Bhutia family, which space the members of each family partitioned off to suit their convenience.

The usual military guard of 50 men from the 44th S. L. I. was stationed at Udalguri during the fair. There was also a police guard, consisting of 1 sub-inspector, 1 head-constable, and 10 constables.

19. *Udalguri Fair.*—The first party of Bhutias arrived at Udalguri early in January. The rest of the Bhutias came down with the Rajahs of Kariapára in February. The Bhutias remained at Udalguri throughout March, and returned to their hills about the beginning of April. As in the previous year, a mouzahdar was told off to keep an account of the import and export trade at the fair.

According to the returns received, the total value of the imports was Rs. 1,16,189, against Rs. 44,439 in the previous year, and the total value of the exports amounted to Rs. 50,677, as compared with Rs. 13,805 in 1877. Further details concerning the trade with Bhután will be found in the section treating of the frontier trade, and need not be given here.

According to the returns, 972 hillmen attended the fair (533 men, 256 women, 97 boys, and 86 girls) as compared with an attendance of 590 in 1877. These statistics are not very reliable, as the same people are in the habit of travelling backwards and forwards daily between Amritol, in the hills, where their principal depôt is formed, and Udalguri; it is therefore extremely difficult to ascertain accurately the real number of visitors. It may, however, be accepted, the Deputy-Commissioner thinks, that the attendance of the hillmen at the fair was greater than in the preceding year.

On the whole, the behaviour of the Bhutias at the fair was good, and no disputes arose between the hillmen and British subjects.

The Deputy-Commissioner visited the fair on the 11th February, and remained there till the 15th idem. While there, Colonel Sherer received the visit from the Sáth Rajahs of Kariapára, the details concerning which have already been given. The fair was also visited by the Brigadier-General Commanding Eastern Frontier Districts, who took this opportunity of inspecting the detachment and stockade.

20. *Kerkária Fair.*—This fair was held at Khagrapára, near Bengbári, in accordance with the arrangement made with the Kerkaria Rajah in 1876. The erection of an additional building for the

accommodation of the hillmen attending this fair has already been noted. According to the returns, the total value of the import trade transactions at the fair was Rs. 16,542, against Rs. 19,897, the total value of such transactions in 1877. The corresponding figures for the export trade are Rs. 16,106 and Rs. 9,669, respectively. Owing to other engagements, the Deputy-Commissioner was unable to attend the fair.

This fair is altogether local in its character, the business transacted at it being almost exclusively between the hillmen and the inhabitants of the Mangaldai sub-division. Very few traders from other districts attend the fair. 340 hill-people are said to have attended the fair on this occasion, *viz.*, 150 men, 100 women, 70 boys, and 20 girls.

21. *Daimárá Fair.*—The usual guard, consisting of one head-constable and eight constables, was stationed at pillar No. 130, to collect the statistics of the trade carried on at Daimárá, which lies two miles beyond our border. The Bhutias commenced coming down to Daimárá about the beginning of January, and they all returned to their hills about the beginning of April. The returns show the total value of the export trade at this fair to have been Rs. 5,684, against Rs. 11,833 in the preceding year, and the total value of the import trade to have been Rs. 7,324, as compared with Rs. 3,727 in 1877.

The Chárduár Rajahs raised no objections to the stationing of the guard at the mouth of the Daimárá pass. They appear to be satisfied with the explanation previously given.

The behaviour of the Bhutias at the Daimárá fair was, on the whole, good; no complaints were made against them.

The Akas.

22. The Western or Hazári-Khoa Akas continue to be well-disposed towards us and peaceable. The Kapás-Chor Akas, on the other hand, did not behave well throughout the year. The Deputy-Commissioner had heard from time to time that these hillmen were in the habit of intimidating our ryots living in the villages adjacent to their hills, and of obtaining things from them at a nominal price, but as the ryots made no complaints no action was taken in the matter. On the 14th March, however, when these Akas, accompanied by their chief Medhi, came into Tezpur to receive their pensions, three of their party went from the *námghar*, the rest-house where they were located, to the Chauk Bazaar, and there robbed a petty shopkeeper of some bundles of betel-leaf. On a hue and cry being raised, the thieves ran away in the direction of the *námghar*, pursued by the police and the bazaar people. They were eventually seized, whereupon one of the Akas drew his dao on the police, but was disarmed. The following day the three Akas were tried for the theft by the Deputy-Commissioner, and were punished with a whipping of 12 stripes each. A large number of Dufflas were present in the station at the time, and witnessed the punishment, the sight of which, it is hoped, had a good effect upon them.

Again, on the day following this occurrence, when the Deputy-Commissioner was on the point of paying Medhi and his party their political pensions in open court, a villager of Balipára came forward and complained that one of Medhi's men had assaulted him, and threatened to burn down his house. On inquiry, however, it appeared to be a case of ordinary quarrel, resulting in a few blows on both sides, and the Deputy-Commissioner, accordingly, permitted the matter to be compromised, and the payment of the pensions to proceed. Colonel Sherer took the opportunity, however, to explain very clearly to Medhi that in future he would hold him personally responsible for the conduct of his followers while in the plains.

Medhi's two brothers still continue to remain in the plains prosecuting their studies at the Balipára school.

The Dufflas.

23. The Paschim Dufflas residing on the borders of Darrang behaved well throughout the year. Both the hill and plains Dufflas came, as usual, into Tezpur to receive their police allowances.

The Tagin Dufflas, on the borders of Lakhimpur, also received their posa during the year. Colonel Graham reports that these Dufflas behaved throughout the year much in their usual way—"squabbling about women, but using no violence worth noticing."

The plundering of a Marwari's shop at Lalukadolonee, just within our border, by a party of Tagin Dufflas on the 13th April, 1877, was mentioned in last year's report. The outrage appears to have originated from a petty trading dispute between the Dufflas and some of the Marwari shopkeepers on the border. It had no political significance. Lieutenant Maxwell, the Sub-divisional Officer of North Lakhimpur, after making preliminary inquiries on the spot, proceeded promptly with an escort of ten constables into the hills to the village of Murang Gam, who was suspected of having had a principal hand in the outrage. The Dufflas promised to restore the stolen property, and delivered over two *deoguties* (copper bells highly valued by these people, and, with *mithan*, constituting their sole wealth) as security for the performance of their promise.

No further proceedings in the matter have yet been reported, Lieutenant Maxwell having been engaged during the ensuing cold weather in accompanying the survey party up the Subansiri Valley and having been afterwards transferred to the Nága Hills. He has now returned to his former post, and a further report in the matter will be required.

The Miris, &c.

24. The Singphos, Khamptis, and Miris were quiet and peaceable throughout the year. The Miris rendered much assistance to Captain Woodthorpe, R.E., while surveying their country, furnishing him with coolies, guides, &c., and affording him hospitality. A report has been received about a Miri of the plains being carried off into the hills; but as, on the other hand, a hill woman is said to have been detained by the plains Miris, the matter will, doubtless, be amicably adjusted.

The Abors.

25. Our relations with the Abors during the year were peaceable, and they received their *posa* at Sadiya, as in the previous year. At the same time their manner throughout the year was, as formerly, insolent and overbearing. The Bor Abors still threaten the Mishmi path to Sadiya, and have made settlements in the plains on the right bank of the Dibong, where they not only claim the land for their own use, but refuse to admit the right of way through it hitherto always enjoyed by the Mishmis. They finally proceeded to set up a claim to receive *posa* on their own account, in addition to the payments already made to the other Abor clans, a demand which of course was at once refused.

Early in the year under report, the Chief Commissioner represented to the Government of India the insolent and threatening attitude of these tribes, and recommended that a military demonstration should be made through the tract during the cold season of 1877-78. The objects of the proposed demonstration were (1) to emphasize the right of the British Government to the tract of country between the Brahmaputra and the foot of the hills; (2) to put a stop within that tract to the cultivation, by either the regular inhabitants or the Abors, of the poppy plant. The Government of India, however, considered that neither of the above objects was sufficiently important or pressing to justify the proposed measure, and they accordingly refused to sanction it, chiefly on the ground that as our troops would be employed during the same season in a punitive expedition against the Angámi Nágas, the time was inopportune for undertaking a second military demonstration in another part of the Province.

A rather singular case of a British subject being sold as a slave to the Abors occurred in August. A Marwari, named Jew Ram, induced a young man of some 20 or 22 years of age, named Jadu Ram Jharua, to accompany him as his servant into the Abor country and there sold him to an Abor for Rs. 100. An inquiry was made, and a reward of Rs. 100 was offered for the apprehension of Jew Ram, who had absconded, but, meanwhile, the Miri who had taken Jew Ram and his dupe across into the Abor country, fearing to get into trouble himself for his participation in the affair, procured the liberation of Jadu Ram by exchanging him for a Miri girl and Rs. 50 in cash.

The bargain being accepted by all parties concerned, Jadu Ram was restored. The culprit, Jew Ram, has not yet been arrested.

The Mishmis.

26. The Mishmis behaved very well throughout the year, and carried on a regular trade with Sadiyá, many of them, residents in the distant hills, who had never before come down, coming down to trade. The survey party were readily admitted into the Mishmi country, and received every assistance from the hillmen. There were some internal disturbances, however, among these tribes. The Chúlikáta and Digaru Mishmis are continually at feud; and during this year a party of the latter were attacked and slaughtered by the Chúlikátas at a spot not far from our border.

None of our subjects, however, having been concerned, and the occurrence having taken place beyond our jurisdiction, there seemed to be no call for our interference. Some slaves of one of the most powerful of the Mishmi chiefs are reported recently to have escaped and to have taken refuge in British territory, but during the year no demand had been made for them. General instructions, have, however, been given to the Deputy-Commissioner that, in case of any such demand being made, it must be clearly explained that the restitution of such fugitives to British territory is quite impossible.

Sadiya Fair.

27. The Sadiya fair, or, more properly, gathering, was held on the 14th, 15th, and 16th February. The number of Europeans who attended the *Mela* was considerably in excess of the number attending in previous years. Although rain kept back most of the Chulikáta and Digaru Mishmis until the sports were over, still the other tribes, the Khamptis, Singphos, and Miris, attended in greater numbers than usual. Just after the gathering had broken up, the Mishmis arrived in considerable numbers, and amongst them came a party of the Mega Khel, under their chief, Rudi. This clan comes from the hills lying behind Lakhow Miji's country, and had never before come into Sadiyá, save to plunder and murder. They were specially well received, both with a view to inducing other clans to follow their example, and in view of the intended visit of the survey party to their country.

The usual races, games, and dancing took place, and all present appeared well satisfied, although rain falling on the third day somewhat interfered with the amusements. The Abors did not present themselves at the fair, though subsequently they came to Sadiya to receive their *posa*. No accidents or disputes of any kind took place at the fair. The Durbar for the Khampti and Singpho chiefs was held on the fourth day, when the usual presents were exchanged, and the chiefs were told that Government was pleased with them for their conduct towards the survey party in the preceding year.

The Nagas.

28. Our dealings with the Angámi Nágas during the year will be found described later on in connection with the administration of the Nága Hills district. Our relations only with the other Nága tribes on our frontier will be noticed here.

The Nágas bordering on the district of Nowgong gave no trouble so far as that district is concerned. Although, owing to the unsettled state of the Nága Hills, a police guard was sent out for the protection of our ryots near the foot of those hills, this guard met with no hostile Nágas, and returned after twelve days.

The following is the substance of the report of the Deputy-Commissioner, Sibságar, on our relations with the Nágas bordering on that district.

There were several cases of theft by Nágas in Sibságar during the year. In five cases Nágas were convicted and punished. There

were two cases in connection with Nágas disposed of by the Deputy-Commissioner in his political capacity. In one case, a Mussulman complained that some of the Kamsingia Nágas had stolen his cow. The offenders were called upon to make good the value of the cow, and they paid a sum of Rs. 10. In the other case, a Nága of the Nowgong tribe stole two calves. The thief, with the cattle in his possession, was discovered in the Tiphook tea-garden. The calves were recovered, but the thief escaped. For this offence a fine of Rs. 32 was imposed upon the tribe and realized. In consequence of the number of cattle-thefts committed by Nágas in the Jorhát sub-division, a police guard was established at Debrapár with the best results.

During the cold season, the Nágas came down, as usual, in large numbers into the Sibságar district to trade. The Nágas living on the east of the district bring down pán-leaves, chillies, ginger, cutchu, yams, and cotton, which they barter for salt and iron. The Angámi Nágas visiting the Golághát sub-division bring down ponies and cloths for sale, and some of them travel up with their goods as far as Dibrugarh. The other Nágas who come down to Golaghát to trade are the Pani Duar and Lota Nágas, who bring down cotton chiefly. The Deputy-Commissioner reports that the trade in cotton with the Nágas has greatly diminished during past years, the quantity brought to market having fallen from 20,000 maunds a few years ago to about 2,000 maunds. The falling off is attributed to bad seasons and the effects of disease among the agricultural population. Since the removal of the military detachment from Golághát to Wokha, and the preliminary establishment of a sub-divisional head-quarters at the latter place, a regular postal line has been established between these two places.

The Deputy-Commissioner reports that the *kotokies* have behaved very well during the year, and have rendered valuable service in maintaining communications between Golághát and Wokha.

The Nágas on the borders of Lakhimpur remained quiet during the year, but a dispute is reported to have arisen between the chiefs of the Námsáng and Borduaria tribes regarding some buffaloes carried off by the latter, which may possibly end in a conflict between these two tribes. The Borduarias are said to have been the aggressors, and to have taken possession of some land which the Námsang Nágas claim. The land in dispute is at some distance beyond the Inner Line, but the Deputy-Commissioner, in the hope of preventing bloodshed, has sent for the chiefs of both parties, with the view to arrange matters.

The Mikirs.

29. The Mikirs, who are a very hardworking and quiet race, gave no trouble whatsoever during the year.

Tribes of North Cachar.

30. Nothing occurred during the year to disturb the peace of the North Cachar Hills, though apprehensions were felt lest the Mozema Nágas should raid in that direction.

Previous to the year under report, the house-tax in these hills was assessed in most of the villages at the rate of Re. 1 per house, while in other villages the rate of Rs. 2 per house was customarily paid. Colonel Keatinge, finding on inquiry that there seemed no sufficient reason for this want of uniformity, and that the higher scale seemed the more reasonable rate of taxation under the circumstances, applied, on the recommendation of the District Officer, for the sanction of the Government of India, to raise the lower rate for the present to Re. 1-8 per house.

This enhanced rate has accordingly been imposed, with the approval of the Government of India, from the ensuing year.

Kukies, Lushais, and other Hill Tribes on the Southern Frontier of Cachar and Sylhet.

31. Our relations with the Lushais throughout the year were friendly. The following is a summary of the information received from time to time regarding events in the Lushai Hills.

Early in the year, 22 families of Tantow's tribe came down and settled in Cachar. They reported that Tantow, who had been imprisoned by Poiboi, and had been released at the instance of Lengkam, would shortly join them. As these families were members of the Waipi sect of Thados, they were allowed to take shelter in the Akhai Kuki poonji within our border, where they have relations. They are still residing at this place. In June, 1877, there was a rumour that Beneoya had burnt certain villages belonging to Pibuk and Baniyatangi, but it turned out to be false.

In July, hostilities broke out between the eastern chiefs, Lengkam, Lalbura, Chunglen, and Bungte, and the western chiefs, Sukpilal, Khalgom, his son, and Lenpoonga. These hostilities originated in a dispute about some jhúm land. Information in the matter was sent to the Deputy-Commissioner of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

On the 28th July, Pibuk died, and was succeeded by her daughter, Baniyatangi.

Sukpilal and the other western chiefs, shortly after the outbreak of hostilities above referred to, sent a deputation to the Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar, asking for assistance against the eastern chiefs. Their request was, of course, refused. In August following, the eastern chiefs sent a similar deputation, consisting of Darpong and others, chiefly with a view to find out what answer had been given to Sukpilal. It was explained to them that the British Government would not assist either side, and they were advised to make peace with the other party. Darpong then asked that the traders who had deserted the Tipaimukh Bazaar on account of the oppression exercised by some servants of Lengkam's might be induced to return. He was told that the matter would be taken into consideration if proper explanations were tendered. Darpong then went away, promising to return with Lengkam's mantri.

Towards the end of September, Lengkam attacked Khalgom, and carried off fifteen heads, in revenge for the theft from some of his people of some salt which they were carrying through Khalgom's country from Sonai Bazaar.

In October, thirty-five of Lalkai's people fled from the Lushai country, through fear of Poiboi. As these men belong to the same sect as Mantrinkup, whose village lies opposite to the Monierkhal guard, they were allowed to stay with him.

In November, Sukpilal's mantris sent a petition to the Deputy-Commissioner, asking him to mediate between the eastern and western chiefs. They were told in reply that if both sides joined in the application the request might be entertained, but not otherwise.

In January, 1878, Darpong come back with Lengkam's mantri, and made restitution to the traders who had left Tipai Bazaar, paying them Rs. 30. He also, on the part of the eastern chiefs, asked for the mediation of the British Government. Upon the Chief Commissioner being informed that both parties were desirous of mediation on the part of the British Government, he directed that they should be advised to make peace, and that a safe meeting-ground in Cachar should be offered to them. Darpong before leaving made a claim to two guns brought down by Tantow's people, who are settled at Akhai Punji; these guns have been retained by the Deputy-Commissioner, pending an inquiry by him into the justice of Darpong's claim.

The history of the Manipuri Nága deputation to the Lushais has been given in para. 12.

Trade with the Lushais is falling off, owing to fighting among the chiefs and the exhaustion of the rubber supply.

There are now eight shops at Bepari Bazaar, six at Lushai Hat, and six at Tipaimukh.

Nága Hills District.

32. The history of the Nága Hills district during the year is, mainly, the history of the punitive expedition undertaken with the object of inflicting punishment on the village of Mozema for a raid committed by a party from that village on the British Nága village of Gumaigáju, in North Cachar, in February, 1877, and to exact reparation for other numerous outrages committed by that village and its neighbour, Konoma, on weaker villages both within British limits and across the Manipur frontier.

On the 6th December, 1877, the late Political Officer, Mr. Carnegy, left Samaguting with the expedition. The force was commanded by Captain Brydon, and consisted of 196 rank and file of the 42nd A. L. I., and 50 police. The troops advanced on Mozema on the morning of the 8th December. On the approach of the troops, the inhabitants of the village at once opened fire on them. The village was accordingly attacked, and carried by assault, and the whole of it, with the exception of three or four houses, was burnt to the ground. The burning of the village was not intended. The Mozema men, after having been driven from their village, dispersed themselves among the neighbouring jungles and hill crests, and did all they could to harass our troops by intermittent firing and frequent night attacks. They also adopted the tactics of operating in rear of the force and interrupting communication between it and Dimapur, in the plains, on the road to Golághát, at the same time frequently threatening Samaguting. An

addition to the force employed was consequently deemed necessary, to bring the expedition to a successful termination, and a reinforcement of 100 men from the 43rd Assam Light Infantry, under the command of Lieutenant Macgregor, who was accompanied by Captain Williamson, the Inspector-General of Police, was despatched to the Nága Hills. In the meantime, desultory fighting had been going on in the hills, and, finally, the Mozema Nágas, being without food and shelter, and their village and all their stores of grain having been destroyed, made overtures for peace. These negotiations were, however, interrupted by the sad death of Mr. Carnegy, the Political Officer, who was accidentally shot by one of our own sentries. On hearing of the accident to Mr. Carnegy, Captain Williamson hastened up from Samaguting, assumed charge of the Political Officer's duties, and commenced to settle the conditions to be imposed upon the Mozema people. The following were the principal conditions:—

(1.) That they should pay a fine of Rs. 50 for their offence of fighting on the political path.

(2.) That they should restore the arms and accoutrements of the three constables who had been waylaid when the dák was intercepted, and also the contents of the plundered mail bags.

(3.) That they should surrender four of their own firearms.

Pardon was extended to Konoma and Jotsoma, on their chiefs formally and humbly tendering their submission.

These conditions were, certainly, lenient, but it was taken into consideration that an ample punishment had already been inflicted on the Mozema people by the destruction of their houses and food supply, and in the privations they had undergone, and it would have been futile, as well as inexpedient, to impose on them a heavy fine, which, all their property having been destroyed, they would not have been able to pay.

It was not, however, intended that Konoma and Jotsoma should have escaped comparatively scot-free.

The omission to impose a fine upon these villages was due to the fact of Captain Williamson having no knowledge of the correspondence which had passed in connection with the expedition. The requisite papers were not at hand in camp for reference, and Mr. Carnegy was too ill to be consulted.

On the 18th January, the terms imposed upon Mozema were fully complied with, and, peace being thus formally concluded, the expeditionary force fell back upon Samaguting on the 28th January.

Colonel Keatinge considered that the main objects of the expedition were, on the whole, attained. A severe example was made of Mozema, and the other villages received a very impressive lesson and warning in the destruction of that village.

The policy to be adopted for the future towards these turbulent tribes, of absolutely prohibiting the repetition of these intertribal raids and massacres has since been clearly laid down by the Government of India, and will be rigidly carried out. Its enforcement may at the

outset be attended with some difficulty, and will demand the exercise of no little tact, firmness, and moderation; but its ultimate result, if consistently pursued, in the complete pacification of those savages, the Chief Commissioner sees no reason whatever to doubt.

In furtherance of this policy, it has already been determined to advance the head-quarters of the Nága Hills district during the ensuing cold season from Samaguting to Kohima, the principal village in the centre of the Angami country, from which the Political Officer will be enabled to maintain an effective supervision and enforce submission to his authority.

Khási and Jaintía Hills.

33. The conduct of the Khásia chiefs, and of the headmen throughout these hills, was good during the year, and nothing occurred to disturb the peace of the district. Certain villages of the State of Khyrim were at variance throughout the year with the Seim of that State, and all efforts on the part of the Deputy-Commissioner to reconcile the opposing parties have been hitherto fruitless. It is hoped that some settlement of the points in dispute may be come to during the current year.

Road communications throughout the district were kept in repair during the year.

Gáro Hills.

34. The Gáros were, on the whole, well-behaved during the year, but a case occurred which shows that remnants of their former savage customs still linger amongst them. A Marwari merchant and his servant were barbarously murdered while travelling in the hills for trading purposes; the perpetrators of the deed not having been actuated by any motives of plunder, but having been instigated thereto by a Laskar, or village headman, who desired to get the heads of the murdered men to burn with the bones of his deceased son. The murder is the more to be regretted, as it will deter traders from travelling in these hills. With some exceptions, the conduct of the Laskars and Lakmas throughout the year was good.

Vaccination operations were carried on during the year on an increased scale, and with the most satisfactory results.

CHAPTER II.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE LAND.

SECTION 1.—SURVEYS.

35. *Topographical.*—Survey operations were carried on during the field season of 1877-78, by No. 6 Topographical Survey Party, in South Sylhet, in the Khási Hills, in the Miri Hills on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, and in the Mishmi Hills at the head of the Assam Valley. The party was divided into two detachments,—one under the command of Major Badgley, and the other under the command of Lieutenant R. G. Woodthorpe.

The first detachment was employed in revising Sheet XIV. of the Khási Hills Survey, and in beginning the survey of the south-eastern part of the Sylhet district, where some 650 square miles of country still remain unsurveyed.

In Sylhet a mere beginning only was made. 300 square miles of country were triangulated and 18 square miles of finished survey completed on the scale of two inches to the mile. The unhealthiness of the jungly tract in which the detachment worked retarded in some degree its progress.

The outturn accomplished by the detachment in the Khási Hills was 282 square miles, at the average cost of about Rs. 34 per square mile. In the Khási Hills also, as in Sylhet, the unhealthiness of the tract surveyed affected the outturn of work.

The second detachment, under Lieutenant Woodthorpe, was employed in the hills at the head of the Assam Valley. Survey operations were commenced in the Miri Hills, in the neighbourhood of the Subansiri River, in conjunction with the Trigonometrical Survey Party under Lieutenant Harman; one of the principal objects of the united party being to ascertain the true course and origin of the Subansiri, and the possibility of its identity with the Sanpo. The two parties were engaged in this survey from the 1st December to the 17th February, the work being much retarded by bad weather. The Miris were, as a rule, found to be very friendly, and ready to give such assistance as they were able. The area surveyed in these hills on the scale of two miles to the inch was 1,500 square miles; but the drainage of a much larger area, on a small scale, was approximately determined. The parties, owing to the orders of Government prohibiting their advance far into the hills, were unable to determine the question as to whether the Subansiri runs through the Snowy Range or not. The results, however, of the observations taken will, when worked out, throw some light on the matter.

Later on in the season Lieutenant Woodthorpe's detachment was employed in the Mishmi Hills. Here also, owing to bad weather and sickness, operations did not proceed as rapidly as was hoped. Still, the whole drainage area of the Dibong was fairly approximately determined, and the course of its main stream accurately fixed for about 50 miles from the Dibong guard. An area in the hills of 1,150 square miles on the scale of four miles to the inch, and about 800 square miles of the low country between Sadiya and the Hills on the scale of two miles to the inch, were accurately surveyed. The Mishmis were found to be very friendly, and no opposition was met with. The total cost of the season's work of Lieutenant Woodthorpe's detachment was Rs. 26,300, giving an average of Rs. 7 per square mile.

36. *Trigonometrical.*—During November, 1877, a large number of hill peaks in Bhután were fixed from survey stations in the neighbourhood of Gauháti and Goálpára.

In December, a detachment of the party, under Lieutenant Harman, entered the Miri Hills below the Bhutan range, working, as already stated, in conjunction with the detachment of the Topographical Survey Party, under Lieutenant Woodthorpe. Two points, named Yellu and Pidi, on the first high range, and to the west of the Subansiri River, were first occupied, and on these peaks stations were built and connected with two stations in the plains near Diklumukh. A hill about eight miles north of Yellu, and a peak called Polu, about twenty miles east of Yellu and east of the Subansiri River, were also occupied, and stations were built and fixed. From these four stations in the Miri Hills about 100 hill peaks were intersected. The principal series of triangulation in the vicinity of Sadiya was carried on to the Dikrang martello tower; to the Manabum hill station (Topographical Survey), in the Singphoo country, south of the Tengapani River, and twenty miles east of Sadiya; and to the Miaobum ridge, about forty miles east of Sadiya, and near the main ridge of the Patkoi range: from all of which stations a number of other hill peaks were intersected.

The branch series of triangulation, "Dibrugarh to Jaipur," was finally completed and closed.

Measurements were taken of the discharge volumes of the Subansiri and Dibong Rivers, of the Brahmaputra at Dibrugarh and at a place ten miles above Sadiya, of the combined Dilbong and the Dihong Rivers, and of the combined Tengapani and Noa-Dehing streams.

With this season's work, the operations of this party of the Trigonometrical Survey in the Assam Valley were brought to a conclusion.

37. *Revenue.*—The demarcation and adjustment of la-kheraj and nisf-kheraj holdings was continued during the year in the district of Kámrúp by Babu Fa'tick Chandra Barua, Extra-Assistant-Commissioner, who is specially employed on this duty, in conjunction with a survey party under Mr. W. H. Patterson. The Extra-Assistant-Commissioner effected the preliminary demarcation of 169 estates, comprising an area of 22,976 acres, of which 14 estates, with an area of 1,000 acres, were made over, after final

Survey of la- and nisf-kheraj holdings in Kámrup.

adjustment of area, to the surveyors. The survey party demarcated by permanent marks 226 estates, covering an area of 20,000 acres. Preliminary surveys were also made of 75 estates, with an area of 4,700 acres.

The total number of estates demarcated in Kámrúp up to 31st March, 1878, is 1,907, of which 137 estates, containing an aggregate area of 51,869·54 acres, have been made over to the survey party. There still remain 2,735 estates, with an approximate area of 147,285 acres, to be adjusted and demarcated.

The total area of la-kheraj and nisf-kheraj holdings in this district, as reported last year, was incorrect, the Deputy-Commissioner having included in it the area of certain kheraj estates, which have been directed to be incorporated with the mouzah. The area of the 4,642 holdings is now reported to be 232,921 acres.

The slow rate at which the survey and adjustment of these la-kheraj and nisf-kheraj lands is advancing to completion having attracted the notice of the Chief Commissioner, he has, since the close of the year, issued instructions concerning the future conduct of the work, which he trusts will result in a largely increased outturn, without any loss of efficiency or accuracy.

Survey of la- and nisf-kheraj estates in Darrang.

38. A small amount of survey work was done by this same survey party in the district of Darrang during the year, consisting merely of the revision of the boundary of one nisf-kheraj estate and the laying down afresh of the boundary of another, besides the interior survey of five waste land grants under the Thirty-years' Lease Rules, the cost of which was defrayed by the district authorities.

39. *Railways.*—In the Report for 1876-77, it was stated that during that year a survey of the Dikhu Valley and intervening country had been undertaken, with a view to ascertain the practicability and the cost of laying down a light railway from the coal-fields of the Sibságar district to the banks of the Brahmaputra; but no report of the operations of the survey party having been received, no detailed information was given. An outline of the results may therefore usefully be given here, although the narrative concerns the year preceding that now under report. This report has been since received.

T. E. Owen, Esq., Executive-Engineer.
F. Brahom, Esq., Assistant-Engineer.
Lieutenant Wells, R.E., Assistant-Engineer.
Bans Gopal, Overseer.

The party consisted of the engineers whose names are given in the margin, deputed from the staff of the Northern Bengal State Railway. The party reached Sibságar on the 17th December, commenced operations on the 26th idem, and closed them on the 15th March following. Careful and detailed surveys were effected of the country between Disangmukh, on the Brahmaputra, and Naginimora, at the foot of the hills containing the coal-beds. At the same time, all available information was procured with regard to the natural features and conditions of the tract, materials for railway construction, supply and rates labour, and the possibilities and requirements of anticipated traffic. A rough exploration was further made of the

hilly tract between Naginimora and the actual coal-beds, with the view to select a line for a wire tramway to connect them with the railway terminus.

Three alternative projects were the outcome of these inquiries, namely:—

(1) A metre-gauge railway from Disangmukh (or from a point on the Disang River a little higher up) to Naginimora, 29 miles, costing Rs. 24,62,000; with a wire tramway from the terminus to the valley of the Borjan, 1½ miles, costing Rs. 28,500, making a total cost of Rs. 24,90,500.

(2) A metre-gauge railway from Sibságar to Suntuck, along the right bank of the Dikhu River, 14 miles, costing Rs. 8,40,000, and a wire tramway from Suntuck to the valley of the Borjan, 6½ miles, costing Rs. 1,04,000, total cost Rs. 9,44,000, the railway to be afterwards carried down from Sibságar to Disangmukh, if found expedient, or water carriage being employed down the Dikhu River to the Brahmaputra.

(3) An alternative line on the left bank of the Dikhu, consisting of a wire tramway from the valley of the Borjan to Behalea, 5 miles; a metre-gauge railway thence to Nazira, and along the Bor-Ali to the Dikhu river, 21 miles, at a total cost of Rs. 13,00,000.

Some doubts, however, are expressed by the Engineer-in-Chief, in commenting on these projects, as to whether wire tramways can be worked as a practical and financial success.

The Dikhu River was found to be in many respects unsuitable as a means of regular water transport. Its course is very winding, and in its upper waters to some distance below Suntuck there are frequent rapids, rendering navigation only possible for "dug-out" canoes. Below Nazira, however, the river is practicable for fair-sized boats, except for two or three months in the dry season.

The Government of India have since the close of the year decided that these projects are all too expensive to be undertaken, and have requested the Chief Commissioner to direct his attention to other and more practicable coal-fields. The question is one of the utmost interest and importance to the Province, both in view to the development and utilization of the abundant mineral resources of the country and to the lowering of the present excessive cost of steamer carriage, both of goods and passengers, on the Brahmaputra, which is one of the principal obstacles to its advancement.

40. During the two years preceding the one now under report preliminary surveys have been conducted by the staff of the Northern Bengal State Railway, with the view to determining the practicability of extending the Bengal Railway system into the Assam Valley. The report of their operations has recently reached the Chief Commissioner, and a brief summary of the results may be given here.

In 1875-76 surveys were completed from Kaldebari Railway Station, on the Northern Bengal State Railway, through Kuch Behar, to

a point near Dhubri; the line of country from Rangpur to Abrapárá, about twenty miles north-west of Goálpára, and that from the Durlah River to Kuch Behar, were also surveyed.

In 1876-77, the survey was continued from Abrapárá to Goálpara, and up the left bank of the Brahmaputra to Gauháti. Another section was also made of the line from opposite Gauháti, on the right bank of the river, to Jagikopa, opposite Goálpára.

The conclusions arrived at by the engineering authorities, upon completion of the above-mentioned surveys, were that a railway from Dhubri along the right bank of the Brahmaputra would be difficult and expensive; but that the construction of a line from Goálpára to Gauháti, and from Goálpára to a point opposite Dhubri, would be a comparatively easy matter.

SECTION 2.—SETTLEMENTS.

41. During the year under review, the following settlements were in progress in the Province:—

(1.) Re-settlement of ilam estates in Sylhet.
(2.) Re-settlement of other petty scattered estates in Sylhet.
(3.) Re-settlement of Jaintiá, in Sylhet.
(4.) Settlement of waste lands in Cachar.
(5.) Re-settlement of Eastern Duars, in Goálpára.
(6.) Petty re-settlements in Goálpára.
(7.) Annual settlements in Assam Proper.

Re-settlement of ilam estates in Sylhet.

42. During the year under review, 177 ilam estates, covering an area of 43,855 acres, were measured. In 247 estates, covering an area of 40,917 acres, measurements made in this and the previous years were tested, and in 146 estates comprising an area of 14,562 acres, re-settlements were concluded; of these 146 estates, the settlements of sixty expire in 1893, of twenty-six in 1894, of four in 1895, and of fifty-five in 1896, A.D., and one estate was settled for a short term, as the land was the subject of a civil suit. This settlement has since been cancelled, the land having been decreed to the plaintiff, as belonging to his decennially-settled estate.

The revenue of the 146 holdings settled during the year amounted to Rs. 4,135, against Rs. 2,056, the former demand. The increase is mainly due to the large extension of cultivated area shown by the new measurements.

Taking the total number of ilam estates in the district to be 3,142, with an aggregate area of 430,000 acres in round numbers, there still remain 158 estates, covering an area of 196,897 acres, to be measured, and 1,084 estates, with an area of 369,640 acres, of which the settlements have to be completed.

The total cost of ilam settlements in 1877-78, including the pay of the Extra-Assistant-Commissioners, was Rs. 13,478, or at the rate of 14 annas 9 pie per acre of the area settled. The average cost per acre of land settled during the previous year was 10 annas and 7 pie. Considering that the increase in revenue obtained by the labours of this establishment during the year was only Rs. 2,079 per annum, it is

apparent that the cost of these ilam settlement proceedings, as well as their rate of progress, was far from satisfactory.

Re-settlement of other petty scattered estates.

43. Of the nankar and other petty estates other than ilam in the district of Sylhet, 234 holdings, covering an area of 1,458 acres, were settled during the year at a revenue of Rs. 1,031, or 11 annas 3 pie per acre. Of these estates, 229 were settled for 30 years and the remaining five for 29 years, both periods expiring in 1907. The former revenue of these estates was Rs. 768, giving an increase of Rs. 263, or 34·2 per cent., at the present re-settlement.

The cost of the re-settlement of these petty estates amounted to Rs. 6,901 during the year under report, including the pay of the Sub-Deputy-Collector in charge of these settlements and his office and field establishments. The cost and rate of progress of these petty settlements are as little satisfactory as in the case of the ilam settlements.

Re-settlement of Jaintiá.

44. Captain M. O. Boyd was placed in charge of the Jaintiá settlements after the death of Mr. W. O. A. Beckett, which occurred on the 31st December, 1877.

During the year under report the measurement of the remainder of the Jaintiá pergunnahs was completed, the outturn of the year's work being an area of 85,778 acres, comprising 7,443 tenures, against 14,689 tenures, with an area of 185,463 acres, in the previous year. The total area of Jaintiá, as ascertained by this measurement, cannot now be given accurately, as the measurement-papers of certain pergunnahs had not been finally checked, nor the calculation of the areas completed at the conclusion of the year.

Satbak.
Chaura.
Bajeraj.
Bardes.
Baurbhag.
Chatal.

The re-settlement of the tenures in the six pergunnahs named on the margin, revised rates for the assessment of which were sanctioned in Government letter No. 851, dated 11th December, 1877, was nearly completed before the close of the year; 11,172 pottahs had been granted, against 7,479 in the previous settlement. The work at first progressed very slowly, owing to the ryots making every endeavour to delay its completion, in view to the prolongation of the old rates of assessment for another season. But the Settlement Officer having directed the settlement of the tenures of some of the recusants with other persons, these tactics of passive obstruction collapsed. The revised assessment of these six pergunnahs will take effect from the current financial year.

Since the close of the year the Government of India have sanctioned the application to the remaining eleven pergunnahs of the rates of assessment already approved for the aforesaid six pergunnahs, there being practically but very little difference in the natural conditions and capabilities of these several tracts. The new rates of assessment per bigha are as follows:—

	A.	P.
Homestead	10	0
Cultivated lands	7	0
Fallow	2	0
Jungle	1	0

At the former settlement the rates of assessment were very low, in some cases little more than nominal, and were calculated on a minute and arbitrary classification of lands, which it has been found advisable to abandon in favour of a broader and simpler system of assessment.

The re-settlement of these remaining eleven pergunnahs is now in progress, and the work, it is hoped, will be completed, as originally anticipated, by the close of November, 1878.

The total expenditure during the year amounted to Rs. 69,724-15-3.

Besides the ordinary work of survey and settlement, the establishment of the Jaintiá settlement was also employed during the year in adjusting the boundary between the districts of Sylhet and the Khási and Jaintiá Hills, and in concluding the settlement of some izad land lying some distance from Jaintiá, within the boundary of the Khási and Jaintiá Hills district.

Settlement of waste land in Cachar.

45. The settlement work in Cachar consisted of the settlement of waste lands newly taken up for cultivation under the Mirasdari Rules of the district.

Inclusive of the 287 applications pending on the 1st April, 1877, there were 506 applications in all for disposal during the year, against 853 in 1876-77. Of the 219 applications filed during the year, 28 were made by tea-planters and 191 by ordinary ryots. Of the total number of applications for disposal, 329 applications were disposed of during the year, leaving 177 pending at its close. The area settled on the final completion of the settlements amounts to 31,268 acres, bearing a maximum revenue of Rs. 21,796, against 21,967 acres, bearing a revenue of Rs. 15,995, in the preceding year. Of the total area settled (31,268 acres), an area of 20,355 acres, with a maximum revenue of Rs. 15,275, was taken up for tea-planting purposes, and the remainder was settled with mirasdars for ordinary cultivation.

The area of the 177 applications pending at the close of the year is estimated at 16,212 acres, of which 9,476 acres have been applied for by tea-planters. The revenue of the area to be taken up in these pending applications is estimated at Rs. 15,000.

It will be observed that there was a considerable decrease in the number of settlement cases for disposal during the year, as compared with the preceding year, but the area finally settled was larger than the area settled in 1876-77. The Deputy-Commissioner explains that the settlement cases are falling off, owing partly to the near approach of the general revision of settlement, and partly to the decreased demand for land on the part of the tea-planters.

Re-settlement of the Eastern Duars.

46. The Eastern Duars, which consist of the five tracts named in the margin, are situated along the northern border of the Goálpára district. The settlement of these tracts, which was concluded from 1870-71 for a period of seven years, lapsed on the 31st March, 1877. Detailed proposals for the re-settlement of these tracts on the system of the Assam settlement were submitted to the Government of India in letter No. 1,164, dated 30th April, 1877. For reasons stated in this letter and in the subsequent correspondence, the

Sijni.
Sidli.
Ripu.
Guma.
Chirang

Chief Commissioner deemed it inexpedient to renew the engagements with the farmers and managers with whom the former settlements had been concluded, and recommended the settlement being made throughout with the cultivating occupants on the ryotwari system prevalent in Assam Proper.

The Government of India have sanctioned the Chief Commissioner's recommendations in the case of Duars Ripu, Chirang, and Guma. The course to be taken with regard to Duars Bijni and Sidli is still under their consideration. Subject, however, to the decision which the Supreme Government may arrive at with regard to the future settlement of these estates, the Deputy-Commissioner, with the concurrence of the Chief Commissioner, settled the five tracts mentioned above with the occupant ryots, under the management of mouzahdars, on the Assam system of administration during the year under report.

The following table shows the results of the re-settlement of the five Duars in question :—

		Revenue in 1876-77.	Revenue in 1877-78.	Increase.	Decrease.
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
(1.)	Bijni	23,948	37 981	14,033	...
(2.)	Sidli	19,791	33,102	13,711	...
(3.)	Ripu	2 364	2,850	486	...
(4.)	Guma	2.125	2,715	590	...
(5.)	Chirang	1,183	853	.....	330
	Total	49,011	77,501	28,490	net.

It will be observed from the foregoing statement that, although the former rates of assessment have not been raised, there has been a very satisfactory increase in the revenue of the first four Duars. The decrease in Chirang is attributed by the tehsildar to the establishment of the extensive forest reserves, and the prohibition against burning the jungle, which has prevented extension of cultivation, and has caused the inhabitants of some villages to migrate to other localities. The Deputy-Commissioner, however, is not satisfied with the sufficiency of these explanations, and has promised to scrutinize the condition of this tract more fully himself. The rates of assessment adopted in this settlement were, as observed before, the same as those assessed in the original settlement of these Duars, and are about half the rates which obtain in Assam, as will be seen from the annexed table :—

Description of land.	Rates in Eastern Duars. Per bigha.	Rates in Assam Proper. Per bigha.
	As.	Rs. As. P.
Homestead	8	1 0 0
Rupit	8	0 10 0
Faringhati	4	0 8 0

If the full rates were imposed, which it may be found possible to effect in a few years, it is very probable that the land revenue of the Eastern Duars alone will shortly very nearly equal the revenue of the district of Lakhimpur or Cachar.

Changes of cultivation in the Eastern Duars.

The total area assessed in the Eastern Duars amounted to 63,664 acres, against 50,977 acres in 1870-71, at the time of the original settlement, showing an increase of 12,687 acres, due to extended cultivation.

Petty re-settlements in Goálpára.

47. Six petty estates were re-settled during the year by the permanent establishment at the Deputy-Commissioner's disposal. The revenue of these estates amounted to Rs. 1,156, against Rs. 1,055 of the former assessment, showing an increase of Rs. 101.

Annual Settlements in Assam Proper.

Kámrúp	135,829
Darrang	82,740
Nowgong	104,631
Sibságar	82,155
Lakhimpur	25,747
	431,102

48. During the year under review 431,102 estates, as detailed on the margin, came under settlement, against 420,022 estates in the preceding year, resulting in a net increase of 11,080 estates, due to extended cultivation. As compared with the previous year, there has been a decrease in the number of settlements in the district of Nowgong. This decrease is attributed to the fact that a number of small plots of land were relinquished by the ryots, and a few much larger plots taken up, there having been, on the whole, an extension of cultivation. All the above settlements were confirmed during the year.

Changes in cultivation and assessment in Assam Proper.

The area of the estates settled during the year was 1,347,721 acres, against 1,315,377 acres in the preceding year, showing an increase of 32,344 acres, as shown in the annexed table:—

	Basti.	Rupit.	Faringhati.	Total.
1876-77	102,843	667,887	544,647	1,315,377
1877-78	103,241	678,106	566,374	1,347,721
Increase in 1877-78	398	10,219	21,727	32,344

The main increase has occurred in the faringhati lands. Of the total area settled during the year, 1,240,856 acres were assessed at full rates, and the remainder (106,865 acres) at half rates.

Revenue of land settled in Assam Proper.

The revenue of the land settled during the year was Rs. 23,46,452 against Rs. 22,74,364 in the previous year.

Ten years' leases under the Assam Settlement Rules.

49. During the year under report 3,861 acres of land were settled at full rates on decennial leases under the Assam Settlement Rules; of this, 2,384 acres were taken up for the cultivation of ordinary crops, and 1,477 acres for the cultivation of tea. In all, 30,190 acres of land are held on ten years' leases in Assam Proper, *viz.*, 19,463 acres at full rates and 10,727 at favourable rates. The whole of the area settled at favourable rates is held by European tea-planters. Of the total area under decennial settlement, 15,345 acres have been taken up by ryots for ordinary cultivation, and nearly the whole of the remainder by Europeans for the purpose of cultivating tea. Only a small area of 252 acres is held by Natives for this purpose.

Five years' leases in Kámrúp.

50. During the year under report, the Chief Commissioner sanctioned the proposal of the Deputy-Commissioner of Kámrúp to lease, for purposes of cultivation on ordinary revenue-paying pottahs for periods of five years, the low lands in North Gauhati within the station limits, with the view to improve the health of the locality by the removal of the jungle and obnoxious undergrowth, the land not being adapted for habitation.

Thirty-four pottahs, covering an area of 71 acres, were granted on these terms, giving a revenue of Rs. 109.

Settlement of nisf-kheraj holdings in Nowgong for 10 years.

51. All the nisf-kheraj lands in the district of Nowgong, except a khat settled for twenty years in 1862, covering an area of 4,113 acres, were settled during the year for a term of ten years in accordance with the orders of the Government of India, the uncultivated and waste portions of these estates, for which the nisf-kherajdars were, under former orders, required to pay revenue, being now left in their possession for the period of settlement without additional assessment.

The resumed portions of the la-kheraj and nisf-kheraj holdings were settled like ordinary revenue-paying lands; all the nisf-kherajdars, excepting two, preferred to have these resumed portions of their estates settled for a term of years, and accepted decennial settlements for these lands. The area of the lands so settled amounted to 920 acres.

In the other districts, the decennial settlements of the nisf-kheraj holdings have not yet been completed.

SECTION 3.—WASTE LANDS.

52. The following table shows the particulars of the leases sold during 1877-78 under the New Lease Rules, referred to in para. 50 of last year's report, as compared with those sold in the preceding year:—

Districts.	Waste land leased under the New Rule in			
	1876-77		1877-78.	
	Number	Area in acres	Number	Area in acres
Cachar	1	69	.....	.....
Sylhet	1	1,121	19	14,185
Kámrúp	6	1,026	8	1,333
Darrang	7	1,517	35	10,016
Nowgong	32	13,795	51	27,188
Sibságar	5	1,019	30	10,457
Lakhimpur	9	4,314	18	8,167
Khási Hills	2	1,583	.....	.....
Total.....	63	24,414	161	71,646

It will be seen that 161 leases, covering an area of 71,646 acres, were sold during the year, against 63 leases, comprising 24,414 acres in the preceding year. 61 leases, covering an area of 33,277 acres, were advertised for sale, but not sold during the year. The first lease under these rules was sold on the 16th August, 1876, so that a complete and fair comparison between the two years can hardly be

drawn; but it is plain that the New Lease Rules have allowed full scope to the extension of the tea industry of the Province. The Chief Commissioner was glad to observe in his inspection tour that the applications for these leases are, as a general rule, disposed of by the District Officers with fair despatch.

In Cachar, as has before been remarked, the planters still seem to prefer taking up the land they require for extending their operations under the ordinary settlement rules in vogue in the district, an area of over 20,000 acres, as will be seen from the table below, having been thus taken up during the past year.

The desire to avoid the competition at auction, which may necessitate a large initial expenditure in purchasing the land, appears to be the principal cause of this preference for the ordinary ryotwari title.

Of the total demand on account of leases sold, Rs. 12,345, Rs. 11,474 were realized, leaving a balance of Rs. 871 in the district of Darrang.

In two cases only, one in Nowgong and the other in Lakhimpur, was there any competition at the auction sale, and the result of this competition was that the two leases sold for Rs. 699, more than what they would have fetched at the usual fixed upset price of one rupee per acre.

Old Assam Rule Grants.

53. During the year under review, twelve Old Rule grants, covering an area of 13,097 acres, were commuted to fee-simple, in accordance with the terms of the original leases, for a sum of Rs. 60,457. These grants yielded a revenue of Rs. 1,090 at the time of their commutation. Two similar grants in Cachar, comprising an area of 3,223 acres, were resumed for non-compliance with the clearance conditions stipulated in their leases, and were summarily settled with the grantees under the ordinary Settlement Rules. At the close of the year there remained 70 grants, with an area of 72,821 acres, held on their original conditions. Of this area, 49,462 acres have come under assessment, and the remainder is still held revenue-free, part in perpetuity.

54. The following table shows the number of ordinary cultivation leases and the area taken up under them for the cultivation of tea in the several districts during the year :—

District.	In 1877-78.				Altogether to end of 1877-78.			
	Number of leases.	Area in acres.	Present income.	Eventual maximum income.	Number of leases.	Area in acres.	Present income.	Eventual maximum income.
			Rs.				Rs.	Rs.
Cachar.....	49	20,355	1,567	15,275	135	64,271	11,259	51,582
Sylhet	.....	.....	.....	.....	8	15,795	1,184	23,956
Kámrúp	.....	.....	.....	.....	30	2,751	4,161	4,161
Darrang	20	1,113	1,686	1,686	162	15,871	23,970	23,970
Nowgong	2	72	108	108	26	4,310	4,908	4,908
Sibságar	152	4,131	6,267	6,267	383	14,146	21,569	21,569
Lakhimpur	5	543·51	824	824	162	18,221	23,157	27,856
Total.....	228	26,214·51	10,452	24,160	906	135,365	90,208	1,58,002

SECTION 4.—GOVERNMENT ESTATES.

55. For the reasons given in last year's report, para. 55, only those petty estates which have not been settled regularly for a term of years, and the revenue of which is collected direct from the tenants, will be treated of in this section. Such estates exist in the districts of Sylhet and Goálpára only. In the former district there were during the year under report 142 such estates, the current demand of land revenue on account of which amounted to Rs. 6,585, and in the latter district there were 109 such estates, the current demand of land revenue on account of which amounted to Rs. 1,538.

56. A statement showing the demand, collections, remissions, and balances on account of these estates in appended below :—

Districts.	Number of estates.	Demand.			Collections.			Remissions.	Balances.		
		Current.	Arrear.	Total.	Current.	Arrear.	Total.		Current.	Arrear.	Total.
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Sylhet	142	6,585	6,743	13,328	452	4,369	4,821	32	6,133	2,342	8,475
Goálpára	109	1,538	9,383	10,921	1,401	9,230	10,631	68	137	85	222
Total	251	8,123	16,126	24 249	1,853	13,599	15,452	100	6,270	2,427	8,697

It will appear from the above statement that out of the total current demand of Rs. 8,123, Rs. 1,853 were collected during the year, leaving a balance of Rs. 6,270 outstanding at its close. This balance is in course of realization.

The arrear demand amounted to Rs. 16,126, of which Rs. 13,599 were collected, and Rs. 100 remitted during the year, leaving at the close of the year a balance of Rs. 2,427 only.

SECTION 5.—WARDS' AND ATTACHED ESTATES.

57. The estates to be reported on in this section are taken up in the order of their enumeration in previous reports.

58. *Sidli.*—The Sidli estate was held by Rajah Gouri Narayan since the original settlement in 1870-71 on a farming lease, under which he received an allowance of 30 per cent. on the collections (10 per cent. for charges of collection, and 20 per cent. as profits), in consideration of his connection with the land under the Bhután Government: but the direct management of the estate was shortly afterwards transferred to the district authorities, owing to the incompetence of the Rajah to manage his own affairs. The above lease expired on the 31st March, 1877. Proposals for the re-settlement of the tract with the

occupant ryots, on the basis of the Assam ryotwari system, were submitted to the Government of India in April, 1877, providing at the same time for the continuance to the Rajah of the allowances he had heretofore received. The settlement with the occupant ryots has meanwhile been carried out, but the proposals with regard to the position of the Rajah in the new settlement are still under the consideration of the Supreme Government.

The settlement of the land having been thus made direct with the ryots, the management of the Rajah's estate during the past year consisted merely in the collection of arrear demands of previous years. Of the sum of Rs. 14,614 due at the close of 1876-77, Rs 9,868 were collected during the year, and the remainder, Rs. 4,746, is reported by the Deputy-Commissioner, after careful scrutiny and detailed local inquiry, to be irrecoverable, owing to (1) desertion of ryots, (2) extreme poverty of ryots, and (3) inaccurate measurements. This amount will accordingly have to be remitted.

	Rs
* Rents collected	9,868
Miscellaneous receipts	43
Total	9,911

The total income of the year, plus the balance of Rs. 2,104 in hand on 1st April, 1877, was disbursed as follows:—

	Rs.
Government revenue for 1876-77 paid	5,786
Establishment and charges of collection of rents	1,049
Maintenance of the Rajah and his family	900
Education of the minor son of the Rajah	104
Miscellaneous expenses	20
Debts paid	4,250
Cash balance in hand	506
Total	12,015

The estate is still indebted to the extent of Rs. 5,287. Arrangements will be made for the liquidation of this amount as soon as final orders of the Supreme Government on the future settlement of the Duar are received.

Hur Kumar Pal's estate.

59. The rental of the various estates belonging to the Minor Hur Kumar Pal amounted for the year to Rs. 46,786, *viz.*, Rs. 12,685 current and Rs. 34,101 arrear. Of this sum, Rs. 9,950 were realized, and Rs. 7,509 remitted during the year, leaving a balance of Rs. 29,327 at its close. Some thirty-one suits, valued at Rs. 1,615, have been instituted for the recovery of arrears of rent, and endeavours are being made to collect as much as possible.

As the above figures indicate, the condition of the estate has not much improved during the year, nor is there any hope of improvement until the re-settlement with the ryots of the lands comprised in the estate, which is being made by Babu Jadu Nandan Das, Sub-Deputy-Collector, is completed, and a proper rent-roll prepared. No such rent-roll or any zemindari accounts, properly so-called, existed during the time of the minor's father. There was no proper system of management, and the rents were levied in an irregular and frequently illegal manner. The ryots, who are generally refractory, held their lands under verbal agreements, and there is now no means of realizing arrears of such rents due to

the estate, except in cases where the liability is voluntarily admitted. The re-measurement of the estate and the adjustment of the old accounts were completed during the past year, and a sum of Rs. 7,509, proved to have been irrecoverable, was remitted. A further sum which has since accumulated will, it is feared, have to be written off. The amount, indeed, which represents the annual demand of the estate, is to a great extent nominal: it is not supported by any agreements of the tenants, and includes a large sum the liability for which has never been admitted by them. When the detailed settlements with the ryots now in progress are finished, the difficulties now encountered in the prompt realization of the rents will, it is anticipated, disappear. In the meantime, the Deputy-Commissioner has been requested to pay very careful attention to the supervision of the affairs of the estate, and to submit proposals for its better management.

The receipts and expenditure of the year connected with the estate are abstracted in the subjoined statement :—

Receipts.	Amount.	Expenditure.	Amount.
	Rs.		Rs.
Cash balance from last year.	3,105	Government revenue paid.....	2,319
		Management of the property and cost of collection	2,140
Rents collected.....	9,950	Law expenses	8,877
		Maintenance of the minor and his family	485
Interest on Government securities	1,680	Education of the minor	258
		Monthly grants, religious ceremonies, and other miscellaneous expenses.....	1,032
Debts recovered	1,061	Debts paid	167
Miscellaneous receipts	414	Cash balance in favour of the estate	932
Total	16,210	Total	16,210

It will be observed from the above that the cost of management during the past year was considerably less than in the previous year. The pay of the manager has since the close of the year been reduced to Rs. 50 from Rs. 70; this will reduce the expenditure by Rs. 240 per annum. The unusual increase in "law expenses" is due to the payment of Rs. 6,540 as costs, &c., in certain cases decided by the High Court against the minor. The other items require no explanation.

The minor Hur Kumar Pal is reported to be making fair progress in his studies.

Gulam Armáni's estate.

60. The estate of the minor Gulám Armáni is improving under the management of the Court of Wards. Out of the total demand of Rs. 683 (Rs. 510 current and Rs. 173 arrear), Rs. 593 were realized and Rs. 5 remitted, leaving

at the close of the year a balance of Rs. 85, of which Rs. 62 were found to be irrecoverable, and have since been remitted. The remainder is in course of realization.

The total receipts of the year amounted to Rs. 790, as shown in the margin. Of this sum, Rs. 210 were paid as Government revenue, Rs. 74 as collection charges, Rs. 96 for the maintenance of the minor and his family, and Rs. 3 as miscellaneous expenses, making a total expenditure of Rs. 383, leaving a cash balance of Rs. 407 in favour of the estate.

	Rs.
Cash balance from previous year	130
Rents realised	593
Elephant hire	67
Total	790

CHAPTER III.

PROTECTION.

SECTION 1.—(BLANK.)

SECTION 2.—COURSE OF LEGISLATION.

61. No special legislative enactment has been introduced into this Province during the year.

The Scheduled Districts Act (XIV. of 1874) was, by a notification dated 3rd November, 1877, declared to be in force in this Province, and notifications under that Act, bearing the same date, extending the New Code of Civil Procedure (Act X. of 1877) and the Specific Relief Act (I. of 1877) to the plains districts of the Province, excluding the Eastern Duars and the North Cachar Hills, were also issued.

The following Acts of the Bengal Council were also extended to the Province :—

Act V. of 1875, B.C. (the Bengal Survey Act), was extended to the districts of Sylhet and Goálpára.

Act V. of 1876 (the Bengal Municipal Consolidation Act) was extended to all the districts within the jurisdiction of the Chief Commissioner.

The proposed Regulation for introducing local rates for roads and similar purposes in the Province is still under consideration by the Government of India.

SECTION 3.—POLICE.

62. The year under review was the first year in which the administration of police affairs in this Province was conducted under the immediate supervision of a special officer stationed at the head-quarters of the Province, and the Chief Commissioner is glad to be able to observe that the appointment of Captain Williamson as Inspector-General has resulted in the increased efficiency of the force.

The Inspector-General, in the report submitted by him, expresses himself well satisfied, on the whole, with the state of the force, and records as his opinion that, so far as he was able to discern, the police are looked upon with favour by the people.

The statistics given in the Appendix afford, the Chief Commissioner thinks, good grounds for considering the condition of the force to be

fairly satisfactory, especially when the difficulty of getting a good class of men for the lower ranks of the police is taken into consideration. This difficulty will, it is hoped, be less felt now that the pay of the constables in the lower grade has been raised, and the prospects of both officers and men have, under the re-organization scheme, been much improved.

Strength and cost of the police.

63. The total sanctioned strength of the Police during the year was 3,365 men of all ranks, but the actual strength of the force amounted to 2,731 men of all ranks only; of these, 41 officers and 340 men were employed on frontier guard duty, and 67 officers and 556 men in guarding jails and treasuries. The total number of men employed purely on police work in the eight plains districts of the Province during the year was 1,814, *i.e.*, in the proportion of one policeman to 16·90 square miles and to 2,116 inhabitants. In Bengal, the corresponding figures are 1 to 9·7 square miles, and 1 to 3,814 inhabitants. In Sylhet, the force is especially weak, there being only one policeman to every 4,501 of the population. The rank and file of the force are about to be augmented. The sanctioned police grant for the Province for the year was Rs. 6,31,000. The grant for the executive police, excluding the pay of the District and Assistant-Superintendents and that portion of Captain Williamson's pay and of the pay of his establishment debitable to "Police," amounted to Rs. 5,39,600. The total cost of the executive police, including the pay of the District and Assistant-Superintendents, calculated on the total sanctioned grant, was at the rate of 2 annas and 4 pie per head of the population, against 2 annas and 3 pie in the preceding year. The rate of incidence is, as is only to be expected, much higher than in Bengal.

Municipal police.

64. The total strength of the municipal police during the year was 94 men of all ranks, and the total cost of the force was Rs 9,840. The casualties in this branch of the force amounted to 23·40 per cent., against 26·43 per cent. in the previous year. The percentage of resignations, discharges, and desertions was considerably lower than in 1876, but there was a slight increase in the percentage of dismissals.

Village police.

65. A considerable improvement has been effected during the year in the condition of the village police in Sylhet, in which district, owing to the weakness of the regular force, the efficiency of the chaukidars is of the utmost importance. In Goálpára, the Bengal Chaukidari Act, VI. of 1870, has been introduced. The whole question of the village police of the Province is now under consideration. Of the frontier police, the Inspector-General speaks in his report in high terms, which Sir Steuart Bayley believes are fully deserved.

River police.

66. The river patrol system in Sylhet is said to work well. The work is naturally distasteful to the police, as it subjects them to much exposure to the weather; but care is taken that each member of the force shall take his fair share of the work. The establishment of a regular police patrol along the

Assam Trunk Road has been attended with marked success. The expediency of extending this patrol along the upper portion of the Trunk Road is under consideration.

67. In Sylhet alone was it found necessary to quarter a punitive police force during the year under report. This measure has had the best effect.

68. Seven new outposts were established during the year in this district, and their establishment will, the Chief Commissioner hopes, be attended by satisfactory results.

69. The total expenditure on account of police buildings during the year amounted to Rs. 13,771-13-2, or at the rate of Rs. 4-1-8 per man on the total sanctioned number of police of all grades. No money was expended on account of buildings in the Lakhimpur and Nága Hills districts. The amount was pretty evenly distributed among the remaining districts.

Casualties.

70. Out of a total number of 3,354 subordinate officers and men, the casualties during the year amounted to 512, or at the rate of 15·26 per cent., against 432, or 12·84 per cent., in the preceding year. The percentage of dismissals, 2·77, was satisfactorily low. Dismissals and desertions were both less than in the previous year. The percentage of resignations, 7·30, was very high, and was owing to the low rate of pay in the lower grades of the force, and to the facilities for obtaining employment on the numerous tea-gardens in the Province. As the pay of the constables in the lower grade has now been raised, the percentage of resignations may be expected to diminish. There were 80 deaths during the year, against 55 in 1876. On the whole, the health of the men was not so good as during the preceding year, but a mortality of 2·4 per cent. is not great for districts reputed so unhealthy as some of those in Assam are. No difficulty was experienced during the year in obtaining recruits. The enlistments amounted to 450, or 13·6 per cent. of the whole strength; this shows a fair element of permanence in the force

Punishments and rewards.

71. 136 officers and 333 men were punished departmentally during the year, as compared with 141 officers and 349 men so punished during the previous year. 94 officers and men were punished judicially, against 116 officers and men punished judicially in 1876. There was an increase in the number of convictions under the Indian Penal Code, but there was a considerable decrease in the number of convictions under the Police Act. These results are fairly satisfactory; but, on the other hand, there were some very serious cases of misconduct, notably a case of torture to extort a confession of guilt in Goalpára, and a case in which certain officers of the Sylhet municipal police plundered the house of a dying man. These results are the more to be regretted, as the Reports of the two previous years show the Assam police to have been singularly free from the violence and extortion which are the besetting sins of the police in India. There were also fewer officers and men rewarded during the

year than during the previous year. Still, on the whole, the Chief Commissioner is fairly satisfied with the general conduct of the force throughout the year. The extra duties in connection with the survey parties and the Nága Hills expedition were cheerfully performed by the men who were told off for these duties. The drill and discipline of the frontier police were well attended to. The contemplated changes in the arms of this portion of the force will tend to promote its efficiency.

Education.

72 Owing to the numerical weakness of the force and the numerous calls upon the time of the men, it has not hitherto been found possible to organize any regular system of instruction. Still, something has been done: of the regular police nearly 21 per cent., and of the municipal police nearly 16 per cent., can read and write. The periodical examinations for head-constableships are calculated to raise the educational standard of the force by making the acquisition of a certain amount of education necessary for advancement from the lowest grades.

73. Attention was paid during the year to the discipline and drill of the force. The frontier police are taught the thorough use of their weapons, company and light infantry drill, guard duties, &c. No attempt has been made to form military battalions, but the officers and men have received such training as is calculated to make them thoroughly efficient for the duties they may be called upon to perform. The Cachar and Sylhet frontier police, especially, are excellently drilled and thoroughly fit for any frontier work.

Cognizable crime.

74. The number of cognizable offences reported during the year was 10,957, against 10,900 such cases reported during 1876. The increase is merely nominal. In the 10,957 cases reported, 8,571 persons were arrested; of these, 8,258 persons were actually put upon their trial, of whom 5,065 were convicted and 2,907 acquitted; of the rest, 265 were awaiting trial at the close of the year, and 21 were otherwise disposed of. False cases show an increase of 1 per cent., as compared with the three preceding years. 8,757 cases were accepted as true, against 8,850 cases accepted as true in 1876. If to the 10,957 cases reported during the year be added 403 cases which occurred in the previous year, but which were brought under inquiry during the year under report, the grand total of cases will amount to 11,360; deducting false cases and those not inquired into, there remain 8,052 cases, against 8,272 in 1876. Convictions were obtained in 2,517 cases, the percentage being 31, as in the preceding year. The total number of persons arrested and put on their trial being, respectively, 8,571 and 8,258, and the total number of persons convicted being 5,065, the percentage of persons convicted to persons arrested and put upon their trial, respectively, is 59·09 and 61. The corresponding percentages for 1876 are 59·53 and 62. These results are fairly satisfactory, but the total number of persons acquitted is large. The slight increase in the number of false cases calls for no remarks. The decrease in the number of cases accepted as true is satisfactory, if the result of a real decrease of crime,—that there was such a decrease by no means necessarily follows.

75. In 1876, of the total number of persons committed to the Court of Sessions, 62 were convicted and 61 acquitted, the percentage of acquittals to the number of persons tried being 49. In the year under report, the corresponding figures are 91 convictions to 46 acquittals, and the percentage of acquittals to persons tried is 33. This result is very satisfactory, as it indicates the exercise of greater judgment on the part of the committing officers. The success of a prosecution before the Court of Session cannot, however, be always accurately gauged beforehand, and acquittal is by no means a sure proof of an error of judgment on the part of the Magistrate.

76. The total value of the property stolen during the year amounted to Rs. 93,210, and, of this, property to the value of Rs. 31,651 was recovered during the year, or 33 per cent., a very low percentage. The percentage of property recovered to property stolen in the preceding year was 43. In Sylhet, the police were especially unsuccessful in recovering stolen property. The Inspector-General assigns no reason in his report for the want of success of the police generally in regard to this part of their duty, and probably no very accurate reason can be assigned. A low percentage of recovery does not necessarily show for any one year a special want of activity on the part of the police; but when year by year the recoveries in particular districts are steadily below the average of all the districts, some explanation is necessary. This is the case throughout the past four years in Sylhet and Kámrúp. In Sylhet, with its dense population and insufficient police establishment, the result was to be expected; but the same explanation scarcely applies to Kámrúp,—at all events not to the same extent.

77. In the following table the crime reported during the last four years is classified:—

	1874.	1875.	1876.	1877.
Class I. Offences against the State... .	228	363	421	394
„ II. Serious offences against the person.	411	607	511	480
„ III. Ditto property, &c	751	827	1,011	1,048
„ IV. Minor offences against the person.	801	948	997	1,076
„ V. Ditto property	3,983	4,141	4 538	4,325
„ VI. Other offences not specified above.	577	724	781	885
Other special laws	111	73	111	146
Total	6,862	7,983	8,403	8,354

78. The increase under Class III. was owing to an increase under the heading "Mischief by killing, poisoning, or maiming animals." The increase under Class IV. is attributable to an increase under the headings "Hurt" and "Wrongful restraint and confinement;" and the increase shown under Class VI. is chiefly under the headings "Vagrancy" and "Local nuisances." Out of a total number of 379

cases of rioting or unlawful assembly reported during the year, not less than 282 cases occurred in Sylhet alone, and 42 cases in Cachar. This offence is rare in the Assam Valley. The returns show a steady increase in this crime in Sylhet and Cachar during the last four years, a state of things much to be deplored. The cause of the prevalence of this crime in Sylhet is the litigiousness and proneness to violence of the Muhammadan population of that district; but in Sylhet not only is the crime very frequent, but the result of the magisterial proceedings in dealing with it is far from satisfactory. Convictions were obtained only in 41 per cent. of the cases, and the proportion of convictions to arrests was only 65 per cent. The question as to how rioting can be most effectually suppressed is one which should occupy the earnest attention of the district authorities; and Captain Williamson has been requested to specially address the Deputy-Commissioner on the subject, reporting the result to the Chief Commissioner.

79. There was an increase of 5 cases under the head of "Murder" and a decrease of 11 cases under the head of "Culpable homicide."

80. One particularly revolting case of murder took place in Goálpára. On the whole, under the heading "Serious offences against the person," there is a considerable decrease in the number of cases accepted as true, which is satisfactory. There were 72 cases of rape reported during the year, against 65 such cases reported during the previous year. The number of these cases is very large, and the result even of the cases declared, on inquiry, to be true is extremely unsatisfactory. These cases are very often trumped up to conceal family disgrace, consequent upon the discovery of an intrigue; and the necessity of exercising the greatest caution in inquiring into them has been insisted on.

81. The results under the head of "Kidnapping" were most unsatisfactory. There was an increase of 32 cases. Some 56 persons were put on their trial, of whom only 18 were convicted. Judging from the cases specially reported, it would appear that the persons kidnapped are generally very young girls, who are taken from their parents or husbands, not for the purpose of prostitution, but for marriage, regular or irregular, and frequently with their own consent.

82. The decrease of 50 cases under the heading "Hurt by dangerous weapons" is most marked. Serious offences against the person or property, or against property only, show a total increase of 37 cases, as compared with the previous year. This increase is due (as stated before) to the increase under the head of "Mischief." Dacoity is happily, a crime by no means prevalent in this Province. There were 9 cases of dacoity reported during the year, against 16 cases reported in 1876. Of these 9 cases, 5 were on inquiry declared to be false, and 2 cases, it is explained, were not inquired into under the provisions of Section 147 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. 15 persons were arrested and sent up for trial, of whom 10 were convicted and 2 acquitted.

83. The offence of robbery may also be said to hardly exist in Assam. Out of the 73 cases of robbery reported, 57 were declared on inquiry to be false. 4 persons only were put on their trial, of whom 2 persons were convicted. Of the above 73 cases, 61 were reported to have occurred in Cachar. Of these 61 cases, 51 were declared to be false. The majority of these so-called "robbery" cases are mere assault cases, exaggerated for the purpose of revenge.

84. The police exercised much more discrimination in dealing with cases of robbery during the year under report than during the previous year.

85. The operations of the police in cases of cattle-theft were particularly satisfactory. There was a large diminution in offences, and, at the same time, a large increase in convictions.

86. Minor offences against the person show an increase, and minor offences against property a decrease, as compared with the preceding year. The decrease in cases of ordinary theft is satisfactory, as is also the marked decrease in cases of receiving stolen property.

87. Vagrancy cases show an increase, being 198, against 159 in 1876. The number is, however, by no means large. Indeed, the provisions of the law relating to bad livelihood are, if the district of Sylhet be excluded, but rarely put in force in Assam.

Non-cognizable crime.

88. 11,744 non-cognizable cases were instituted during the year, as compared with 12,134 such cases instituted during the previous year, showing a decrease of 390 institutions. Of the total institutions, more than half were cases of criminal force. In 750 cases only were the police employed to make inquiries. Out of the 11,744 cases instituted, process issued in 7,896 cases only. 9,448 persons actually appeared to stand their trial; of these, 973 persons were discharged after appearance, 2,711 were acquitted, and 5,647 were convicted. The proportion of persons convicted to persons who actually appeared before the courts was 59 per cent., against 61 per cent. in 1876. Very nearly half the total number of cases were instituted in Sylhet.

89. Cases under Class I. show a most marked decrease, having fallen off from 753 in the previous year to 596 in the year under report. Of the 596 cases instituted during the year 335 cases occurred in Sylhet. The magisterial officers in Sylhet acted with greater discretion during the year under report than in the previous year in the matter of prosecutions under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code. The falling off in the number of cases of serious offences against property is notable, such cases being 44 only in number, against 127 in 1876.

90. There was an increase of 191 in the number of cases under Class IV., this increase calls for no remarks in particular. The results of cases of this class are, from a statistical point of view, rarely satisfactory. Classes V. and VI. show, respectively, a decrease of 40 and of 275 cases in 1877, as compared with the preceding year.

Crime in the hill districts.

91. There were 124 cases of cognizable crime reported from the hill districts in 1877, against 171 such cases reported in 1876. In the 124 cases reported, 132 persons were arrested, of whom 131 persons were sent up for trial, of these, 97 persons were convicted and 31 acquitted. The percentage of persons convicted to persons actually put upon their trial was 74, against 83 in the preceding year. The only cases deserving of special notice occurred in the Khási Hills. There is but little reported crime in the Gáro Hills and Nága Hills districts.

92. There were 66 cases of ordinary theft reported during the year, against 80 such cases reported during 1876. 74 persons were put upon their trial, of whom 65, or 87·83 per cent., were convicted. The percentage of persons convicted to persons who were actually tried in 1876 was 84·31.

93. The total value of the property stolen during the year was Rs. 1,482, and the value of property recovered Rs. 929, or 62·68 per cent., against 9·04 per cent. in the previous year. These results may be pronounced to be fairly satisfactory.

SECTION 4.—CRIMINAL JUSTICE.

94. The Chief Commissioner has been favoured with a copy of the High Court's Report on the Administration of Criminal Justice in Assam during 1877, and from this Report the following review of the state of crime and of the working of the criminal courts in the Province has been compiled.

As in former years, the figures given are only for the eight plains districts of the Province. The administration of criminal justice in the three hill districts is carried on in the Political Department, and the High Court have no concern with it. The statistics of crime in those hill districts will be found at the end of the section on police administration.

95. All the criminal courts with which this chapter deals are constituted under the Criminal Procedure Code (Act X. of 1872). The head-quarters of the Sessions Judge of Sylhet are at that station, but he goes on circuit to Cachar. The Sessions Judge of the Assam Valley Districts is stationed at Gauháti, but he holds periodical jail deliveries at the head-quarters of each of the districts in his charge. The district magistrate of Sylhet is styled a Deputy-Commissioner; but, as the district is an ordinary regulation district, he exercises the powers of a district magistrate only. In all the other districts of the Province the Deputy-Commissioners have been vested with the special powers described in Section 36 of the Criminal Procedure Code (Act X. of 1872), which they exercise in addition to their ordinary powers as district magistrates. The question as to whether the Deputy-Commissioner of Sylhet should not also be invested with these special powers is under the consideration of the Chief Commissioner.

Deputy-Commissioner with special powers.

96. At the end of the year under review there were in all 70 magistrates, of whom 34 were Europeans and 36 Natives. Of the 70 magistrates, 27 were magistrates of the first class, 13 were magistrates of the second class, and 30 were magistrates of the third class. Of the 54 magistrates in the Brahmaputra Valley districts 33 were stipendiary and 21 honorary magistrates. In Cachar and Sylhet, the two districts of the Surmá Valley, there are no honorary magistrates.

Magistrates classified.

97. The total number of offences reported and of persons convicted during the past two years was as follows :—

	1876.	1877
Offences reported	16,124	14,603
Persons convicted	11,063	10 897

Crime, on the whole, then, may be said to have decreased during the past year. Judging from the number of convictions, however, it increased greatly in Darrang and Lakhimpur, and to a less extent in Kámrúp, Nowgong, and Sibságar. The chief decrease was in Sylhet and Cachar. In Lakhimpur, the increase in convictions occurred notwithstanding a large decrease shown in the number of offences reported.

98. During the past year but one case from Assam, in which but one person was involved, was tried by the High Court in the exercise of its ordinary criminal jurisdiction : A European British subject, charged with having killed a coolie, was committed for trial before the Sessions Judge of the Assam Valley Districts by the Deputy-Commissioner of Lakhimpur, on charges under Sections 304 A and 325 Indian Penal Code. On a reference by the Judge to the High Court, this commitment was quashed, and the accused was tried by the High Court on a charge of culpable homicide, &c. The jury convicted him of having caused hurt, and he was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for six months.

Original Jurisdiction, High Court.

99. The number of persons brought before the courts of session for trial during the past year (including 23 persons who were awaiting trial at the close of 1876) was 196, of whom two were discharged without trial, three died or escaped, and 12 awaited trial at the end of the year. Of the balance of 179 persons whose cases were disposed of on trial, 71 were acquitted, and 108, or 60 per cent., convicted. In 1876, of 155 persons whose cases were disposed of on trial, 75, or 18 per cent, were convicted.

Courts of Session Persons under trial

Result of trials

Shown separately for each Judgeship, the percentage of convictions during the past two years was as follows :—

	1876	1877.
Assam Valley	40	72
Sylhet and Cachar	51	57

While the result of trial was improved in both courts of session, it is most satisfactory in the Assam Valley districts.

100. The number of witnesses who attended the sessions courts was 827 in the past, compared with 843 in the previous year. In the Assam Valley districts separately, the number was 167, against 81.

Number of witnesses examined.

101. In the Assam Valley, 28 cases in all were tried by jury in the past year, in one of which only the Judge did not approve of the verdict given.

Trial by jury.

102. In Sylhet and Cachar, the 48 cases disposed of were tried with the aid of assessors, from whose opinion the Judge differed in six cases only.

Trial by Assessors.

Punishments.

103. The sentences imposed during the past year by the courts of session were as follows :—

Capital punishment	9
Transportation for life	20
Ditto ditto a term	13
Rigorous imprisonment	66
Ditto ditto in addition to fine	15

Deputy Commissioners exercising special powers under Section 36, Criminal Procedure Code

104. The number of cases disposed of by the Deputy-Commissioner of Cachar in 1877 by virtue of the powers vested in him under Section 36, Criminal Procedure Code, was six. In two cases the sentences passed did not exceed two years. In three out of the four cases remaining, the Sessions Judge confirmed the orders of the Deputy-Commissioner. In the Assam Valley districts the number of cases similarly disposed of by the Deputy-Commissioners under this section of the Code was 29. In two out of three cases referred to the Sessions Judge, the orders of the Deputy-Commissioners were upheld. They were reversed in one case. The Judge of these districts remarks that many of the cases which were committed to the sessions might well have been disposed of by the district magistrates under their special powers. The matter is one in respect to which orders have already been passed by the Chief Commissioner, requiring district magistrates to use these special powers more freely.

Magistrates' courts.

105. The total number of persons under trial in the courts of magistrates was 17,735 in the past, compared with 17,138 in the previous year. There was an increase of business in all the Valley districts except Goálpára, and a considerable decrease in Sylhet and Cachar. The total number of persons whose cases were disposed of in 1877 was 17,347, against 16,738 in the year preceding. The courts thus kept pace with the increase in the business coming before them.

The number of persons awaiting trial at the close of the year was 366, 11 less than at its commencement; of the whole number, 6 only had been under trial more than three months, and 39 more than one month.

106. The share taken by the courts of the several grades in trying cases during the past two years is exhibited in the following statement, which shows the number of persons whose cases were disposed of, excluding those committed to the sessions, and those who died, escaped, or were transferred :—

	Valley districts.		Sylhet and Cachar.	
	1876.	1877.	1876.	1877.
District magistrates	909	945	721	739
Subordinate paid magistrates	5,820	6,658	8,572	7,093
Honorary magistrates	791	1,340	.....	.....

The following percentage of convictions for the past two years will show the result of the above trials :—

	1876.	1877.
District magistrates	67	79
Subordinate paid magistrates	67	62
Honorary magistrates	55	46

From the above, it will be seen that, except in the case of district magistrates, the results of trial were less favourable in the past than in the previous year. As regards the courts of district magistrates, it is to be observed that in Nowgong there were no acquittals, and that in Darrang 92 per cent. of the persons tried were convicted. The Deputy-Commissioners of these two districts have been requested to explain the nature of the cases tried by them.

In Nowgong and Lakhimpur the results of trials in the courts of the subordinate paid magistrates were most favourable, the ratio of convictions being 71 per cent. and 70 per cent., respectively. The results of trial were least favourable in Goálpára, where the ratio was 54 per cent. only.

In the courts of honorary magistrates the results of trials during the past year were far from good. They were worst in Sibságar and Darrang, where 18 and 22 per cent. only of the persons whose cases were disposed of were convicted, and they were best in Goálpára, where the ratio was 76 per cent.

Number of witnesses examined.

107. The total number of witnesses examined in the criminal courts of the Province during the past year was 34,940. Of these, 30,222 were examined on the first day of attendance, 3,043 on the second, 895 on the third, 780 later than the third day. These results may be regarded as not unsatisfactory. It is singular, however, that all but seven witnesses in Cachar should have been examined on the first day of attendance ; while in the neighbouring district of Sylhet no less than 754 witnesses were detained more than three days.

Punishments.

108. The number of persons sentenced by magistrates to imprisonment, fine, and flogging, respectively, or to more than one of the punishments, was as follows :—

Imprisonment	3,699
Fine	6,196
Whipping	189

The imprisonment ordered in the past year was solitary in the case of two persons, rigorous in the case of 3,620 persons, and simple in the case of 77 persons. 913 persons were fined and 23 flogged in addition to other punishment. The imprisonment ordered did not exceed six months in the case of 3,235 persons, and exceeded two years in the case of 35 persons only.

The fines imposed during the year aggregated Rs. 79,972, against Rs. 84,834 in the previous year. The amount realized was Rs. 67,317 in 1877, as compared with Rs. 71,418 in the year immediately preceding. There was, thus, an apparent decrease in realizations during the past year, but the percentage of realizations was a little higher in 1877 than in 1876, being 84·2 against 84·1 respectively.

Of the fines realized, Rs. 8,545 were awarded as compensation in the past year, against Rs. 7,299 in the previous year. This increase was due mainly to the action of the magistorial authorities in the districts of Lakhimpur and Kámrúp. In the former the amount awarded as compensation in 1877 was more than double that in 1876, and in the latter it was nearly double.

Appellate Jurisdiction, High Court.

109. The number of appeals from the decisions of the courts of session instituted, disposed of, and pending in the High Court during the past two years is exhibited below :—

	1876.	1877.
Instituted	52	34
Disposed of	50	38
Pending	9	5

The falling off in the number of appeals in 1877 is remarkable, seeing that, as above stated, the number of persons convicted by the Sessions Judges in that year was 108, as compared with 75 in 1876.

The results of the appeal cases disposed of are shown below :—

	1876.	1877.
Affirmed	35	27
Reversed	8	8
Varied	7	3

The percentage of decisions reversed or modified was thus 29 per cent. in 1877, against 30 per cent. in 1876.

Appellate Courts subordinate to the High Court.

110. In the following comparative statement the number of appeals preferred, disposed of, and pending in the courts of session and in the courts of the district magistrates during the past two years are shown together :—

	1876.	1877.
Preferred	504	493
Disposed of	494	476
Pending	16	35

In the past year there was a considerable increase in the number of appeals preferred to the district magistrate, and a considerable decrease in those preferred to the Sessions Judge. Taking these courts together, the number of appeals in 1877 was less by 11 only than that in the preceding year.

The Judge of the Assam Valley Districts accounts for a falling off in the number of appeals coming to him from Kámrúp by the fact that a better class of pleaders now practise in his court, who do not take up cases unless there be some substantial ground for appeal.

The number of appeals to the district magistrate in that district has largely increased, and this the Judge attributes to the number of honorary magistrates appointed during the year.

Of the appeals disposed of in 1877, 217 were decided by Sessions Judges and 259 by district magistrates, the corresponding figures for 1876 being 312 and 182, respectively. In all, the sentences or orders appealed from were affirmed in 312 cases.

111. The number of cases of revision instituted, disposed, and pending in the High Court during the past two years is shown below:—

Superintendence and Revision, High Court.

	Instituted.	Disposed of	Pending.
1876	26	24	2
1877	30	30	2

Of the 30 cases disposed of during the year, the orders of the lower courts were affirmed in 13 and reversed in 17.

SECTION 5.—PRISONS.

112. The total number of prisoners of all classes confined in the jails and lock-ups in this Province during the calendar year 1877 was 9,012, against 8,832 in 1876.

Number of prisoners.

The daily average number of convicts in jail was 1,273·38 against 1,383·26.

It will be seen that, while the entire prison population during 1877 exceeded that of 1876 by 180, the daily average number of prisoners confined in the jails and lock-ups considerably decreased. This is attributable to the release, on the 1st January, 1877, of 227 prisoners in commemoration of the assumption of the title of "Empress of India," by Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen.

Taking the figures for the past four years, the prison population of the Province continues to increase, as noticed in para. 114 of last year's Report:—

1874	8,06
1875	8,409
1876	8,832
1877	9,012

This increase was only to be expected, owing to the operation of the causes mentioned in the para. of last year's report above referred to, *viz.*, the opening of more courts, and the increase in the immigrant population, and also to the rise in the price of articles of food. Some of the increase may, also, perhaps be due to increased efficiency of the police force.

The number of civil prisoners in confinement during the year was only 124, against 153 in the previous year.

The number of under-trial prisoners was 3,032, against 3,026 in 1876.

Out of the entire population of the jails, the large number of 1,181* were foreigners (tea coolies and others). The offences for which the tea coolies were convicted were chiefly desertion under Act VII. of 1873 and offences against the person. These figures show prominently how large must be the foreign element in the general population, when the proportion of foreigners among the prisoners in jail amounted to nearly 12 per cent., of which nearly 9 per cent. were imported labourers on tea-gardens.

* 906 tea coolies.
275 others.
1,181

The total female population of the jails and lock-ups was 249, against 268 in the preceding year.

Only 24 juvenile prisoners under 16 years of age were confined during the year. There is no need at present for a reformatory for juvenile offenders in this Province, and it will be some time before the want of such an institution is felt.

Sentences.

113. The percentage of prisoners sentenced to rigorous imprisonment was 97·94, as compared with 95·76 in the preceding year. The Chief Commissioner is glad to see this increase, as he totally disbelieves in the efficacy of simple imprisonment as a deterrent, and he can conceive nothing more conducive to moral deterioration than jail life without useful occupation. The majority of the sentences of the prisoners did not exceed a period of six months.

The number of prisoners who had been previously convicted received into the jails during the year was by no means large, being 297, against 344 in the previous year.

Only 17 prisoners were committed to jail during the year on account of bad livelihood: 48 remained in jail on this account from the preceding year. Very little resort is had in this Province to the precautionary provisions of the law regarding bad characters, a result which, in default of evidence to the contrary, may be taken to indicate that the enforcement of these provisions is seldom necessary in Assam. The immunity which the Province most fortunately, and to a very large extent, enjoys from the presence of habitually criminal classes and tribes no doubt has a very considerable influence on the frequency of the application of this law.

Escapes.

114. Eight prisoners escaped from the jails and five from the lock-ups during the year, and, considering the insecure nature of many of the jail buildings, and how much extramural labour is resorted to in the Assam jails, this number may be considered as very small. Nearly all those who escaped were re-captured. The total number, however, of escaped convicts now at large is still great, and the Chief Commissioner has issued special instructions to District Officers, with a view to effect the re-capture of these men, whom doubtless a lengthened freedom has rendered less alert than formerly.

Jail offences and punishments.

115. The number of offences against prison discipline in 1877 was 727, as compared with 613 in 1876. The number of punishments in 1877 was 731, against 616 in the previous year. These figures show a slight increase in the number of offences against prison discipline, as compared with the previous year, owing partially, no doubt, to the increase in the jail population. Part of the increase may, however, be fairly ascribed to increased vigilance on the part of the prison officials, and in so far is satisfactory. The ratio of punishments to prisoners, 59·57, is by no means abnormally high. The number of prisoners to whom corporal punishment was awarded was largely in excess of the corresponding number during the previous year. The Chief Commissioner is not entirely opposed to the infliction of corporal punishment for breaches

of jail discipline, but he would like to see this kind of punishment kept in reserve for habitual offenders, and resorted to as little as possible in ordinary cases. He hopes that, with the improvement in jail accommodation, it will be found possible to have recourse more largely to other punishments. The question of the allotment of tasks is a most important one, and the Inspector-General has been requested to give the subject his attention. It is very desirable that the quantity of labour exacted should vary as little as possible jail by jail.

Mark system.

116. Increased attention was paid during the year to the development of the mark system in the different jails in the Province, with, on the whole, very satisfactory results. The system was especially well worked in the Gauháti Jail. The full development of the system must naturally be a work of time, and it will work well in proportion as the prisoners learn to understand its benefits.

Classification.

117. The rules regarding classification have been carried out as far as practicable in the different jails. Civil and under-trial prisoners have been completely isolated from the other prisoners. The number of juvenile offenders, as already observed, is so small, that, except in the Gauháti Jail, no separate wards were provided. Proper accommodation is provided for female prisoners.

Discipline.

118. The average number of prisoners employed as convict warders during the year was 24·87, or 1·93 per cent. of the daily average jail population. The corresponding numbers for the previous year are 29·63 and 2·15. The decrease is due to the extraordinary releases which took place on the 1st January, 1877. The Inspector-General testifies to the usefulness of these convict warders, and the Chief Commissioner thinks that convicts might with advantage be more largely employed as prison officers than they are. The prospect of attaining the position of convict warder induces to discipline and good behaviour, and the knowledge of the consequences of losing that position results, as a rule, in a careful discharge of duty.

Expenditure on jail buildings.

119. The total sum expended on jail and lock-up buildings during the year was Rs. 47,545, of which Rs. 44,959 were expended by the Department of Public Works and Rs. 2,586 by the Jail Department. Many of the jails are simply mat huts, and are very insecure. During the year, the Goálpára Jail was reduced to the status of a lock-up, and fifty prisoners were transferred from the Nowgong to the Gauháti Jail. The Chief Commissioner proposes to carry the abolition of the smaller jails still further. He thinks that, as far as possible, prisoners should be massed in large jails instead of being distributed throughout a number of small jails, and steps are being taken to carry this view into effect.

General expenditure.

120. The total amount expended during the year under review in the jails of this Province under the heads of "Rations," "Fixed establishment," "Police-guard," "Hospital charges," "Clothing," and "Contingencies,"

amounted to Rs. 1,07,316, against Rs. 1,12,391 during 1876. The cost of rations (the most important item) came to Rs. 32-10-5 per head of average strength, as compared with Rs. 34-1-6 in the previous year. This result is owing to the introduction of the system of storing paddy for prison consumption. In consequence of the dearness of provisions in Assam, the cost of rations will be always high. The Chief Commissioner, however, hopes that the cost under this head will be still further reduced during the present year. The total cost (under all headings) per head of average strength amounted during the year to Rs. 78-0-11, against Rs. 75-8-8 in 1876, but this increase is accounted for by the decrease in the average number of prisoners in confinement during the year.

The net cost of each prisoner to the State during the year under report was Rs. 110, against Rs. 96 in each of the two previous years. This increased cost is entirely due to the comparatively large amount expended on jail buildings through the agency of the Public Works Department, and to the increased cost of the head-quarters office. The first cause is only of a temporary nature. Nearly all the other heads show a decrease.

Manufactures.

121. The receipts on account of manufactures in the different jails during the year amounted to Rs. 43,037, and the charges to Rs. 29,596. The profit was Rs. 13,441, or Rs. 11-12-6 per head of effective prisoners. In the above calculation, however, no credit has been taken by the Jail Department for the work of the prisoners furnished to the Public Works Department. None of the outstanding debts in any of the jails were particularly large. Towards the close of the year, the Chief Commissioner ordered that credit should be given to the Jail Department for the prison labour employed on station or road work. It is expected that the result of this ruling will be a decided improvement in the jail receipts next year.

Sanitary.

122. The vital statistics show an improvement in the health of the prisoners, as compared with the preceding year, the percentage of sick on average strength being 3·88, against 4·25 in 1876, and the percentage of deaths on average strength being 5·54, against 5·85 in the previous year. Dysentery and diarrhœa claimed the largest number of victims. There was, as usual, a large number of cases of intermittent fever, but only three cases proved fatal. The sanitary arrangements of the jails appear to be good, and the important question of a good water-supply receives attention. Opium-eaters are a class of prisoners who are to a certain extent a difficulty in the way of jail administration in Assam. To permit them unrestricted access to their accustomed dose would be subversive of all discipline; while absolutely and at once to stop their supply of the drug would be dangerous to their health. No hard-and-fast rule on the subject can, however, be laid down, and the medical authorities must necessarily treat each case of the kind by itself.

SECTION 6.—CIVIL JUSTICE

Original cases instituted, disposed of, and pending.

123. The total number of suits instituted in the civil courts of the Province in 1877 was 21,282, against 19,429 in the previous year. In Sylhet there was an increase of 2,116 suits; on the other hand, there was a decrease of 139 suits in the Valley Districts, and of 124 in Cachar. In Sylhet, there was a slight decrease in "other suits," and the increase noted occurred chiefly in small cause court cases. In Cachar the decrease in cases of this class is attributed to the high price of necessaries and to abnormal causes having operated in 1876. In the Assam Valley districts the decrease, which was most marked in Lakhimpur, Kámrúp, and Goálpára, is attributed to the introduction of the New Code of Civil Procedure, to the failure of the crops in North Lakhimpur, and to the absence of a sufficient staff of officers with munsif's powers at that place and at Golághát.

Excluding suits in the revenue courts, the total number of cases disposed of during the past year was 20,889, against 19,845 in the preceding year. In Sylhet the services of an extra munsif were employed for somewhat more than a month. Notwithstanding an increase in the number of disposals, this still fell somewhat short of the number of cases instituted. In Cachar a similar result is observed, though the number of institutions had decreased. The Judge explains that work in his district has been prejudiced by the frequent change of judicial officers, and by the sudder and sub-divisional stations being left for a time without a munsif.

The total number of cases pending at the close of the year was 2,840, as compared with 2,265 at the close of 1876. In Cachar the percentage of increase is very high, and is attributed to the causes mentioned above.

Suits and appeals pending more than one year.

124. There were at the end of 1877 14 suits and 6 appeals which had been pending more than 12 months. Of these, 4 appeals were in Sylhet and the rest of the cases in the Valley districts.

Number and value of suits instituted in 1873 and 1877.

125. The amount in litigation in the civil courts of the Province was Rs. 16,77,750, against Rs. 15,27,210 in 1873, the number of suits instituted being less by 429 in the former than in the latter year. Comparing the figures with those for 1876, when the number of suits instituted was 19,429, and their value Rs. 35,05,382, the decrease is very marked; as there was an increase of over half a lakh of rupees in Cachar and Sylhet taken together, the decrease has clearly occurred altogether in the returns of the Assam Valley districts, and principally in the district of Goálpára, where in 1876 certain zemindars instituted suits against the Government to the aggregate value of 20 lakhs of rupees.

Classification of suits.

126. The number of cases of the several classes instituted during the past three years was as follows:—

	1875.	1876.	1877.
Small cause court class	15,519	15,345	16,748
Rent suits	1,351	937	1,415
Other cases	3,941	3,147	3,119
Total	20,811	19,429	21,282

In Sylhet no less than 1,335 rent suits were filed in the past, against 892 only in the previous year. There was at the same time an increase of 1,726 in the number of small cause court class cases in this district. In the absence of a small cause court, the Subordinate Judge is vested with small cause court powers for the trial of petty cases, but only 442 such cases were instituted before him. In the Valley districts there was a slight decrease in small cause court class cases and also in other cases.

The number of suits of the small cause court class filed in each district during the past two years was as follows:—

	1876.	1877.
Sylhet	6,833	8,559
Valley districts	6,965	6,743
Cachar	1,547	1,446

The number of other cases was as follows:—

	1876.	1877.
Sylhet	2,031	1,958
Valley districts	671	754
Cachar	445	407

In the Valley districts rent suits are tried by the revenue courts under Act X. of 1859, and are not therefore included in the returns.

The following were the chief classes of rent suits instituted in the Province during the last two years:—

Description of suits.	Civil Courts.		Revenue Courts.	
	1876.	1877.	1876.	1877.
Arrears of rent	890	1,305	269	241
For pottahs or kabuliyats	3	7	38	72
For ejectment	18	76	14	3
Other suits under the Rent Law	15	27	29	43
Total	926	1,415	350	359

The most noticeable features in the returns are the total absence of suits for enhancement of rent in the Province during the past year, and the large increase of suits for arrears of rent and for ejectment in Sylhet.

Of 3,119 "other suits" filed in 1877, 2,579 were suits for immoveable property and 184 for declaration of right to the same. The total number of suits for the enforcement of matrimonial rights was 208, as compared with 343 in the whole of the Lower Provinces of Bengal. In the Valley districts alone there were 143 suits of this description, compared with 102 in 1876 and 156 in 1875. With respect to them, the District Judge reports that in almost every case the evidence is of a meagre and unsatisfactory character. It is hardly possible to do justice between

the parties under the circumstances, and the Judge's suggestion that a law should be passed, rendering the registration of marriage among the Assamese compulsory, or at least optional, is worthy of consideration.

Suits how disposed of.

127. The manner in which suits were disposed of during the past four years was as follows :—

Year.	Withdrawn, compromised, confessed, &c.	Decided *ex parte*.	Contested.	Total.
1874	7,485	5,371	6,404	19,260
1875	7,816	5,645	7,850	21,311
1876	7,756	5,786	6,651	20,193
1877.....	7,984	6,918	5,987	20,889

From the above, it appears that in the past year the proportion of contested cases was 28·6 per cent., as compared with 32·4 per cent. in the previous year, while in Sylhet and Cachar the ratio was only 23 per cent., or less than the average in Bengal; in the Valley districts it was as high as 37·6 per cent. The difference in the results in Goálpára as compared with those in Nowgong and Sibságar, as shown in the margin, is very marked. The fact that in Goálpára the people and the pleaders are more intelligent and better educated than in the districts further up the Valley of the Brahmaputra may, as has been suggested by the Judge, in some measure account for this feature in the returns. The character given to the vakeels as a body at Nowgong is far from favourable, and it may be that cases which ought not to have come into court at all are taken up by them, and that suitors are induced to resist just claims. The High Court has taken action, at the instance of the District Judge, with a view to inducing a better class of men to practice at the bar in Assam.

Proportion of contested cases.
Goalpara ..... 26 per cent.
Nowgong..... 51 " "
Sibsagar ..... 40 " "

Details as to suits decided.

128. The result of trials for the past two years is shown below:—

	1876.	1877.
Judgment for plaintiff	11,571	12,105
Judgment for defendant	6,410	6,823
Compromised	1,864	1,961

The percentage of cases won by plaintiffs or compromised during year under review was 57·95 and 9·4 per cent., respectively, somewhat less than in Bengal. The percentage of cases won by the defendant was correspondingly greater, being 32·65 per cent., against 23·8 per cent. in the Lower Provinces. It may be that, with an inferior bar in Assam, cases are brought before the courts which in Bengal would not be instituted. Want of skill also probably affects the case of a plaintiff more seriously than it does the defence.

Applications under Section 119, Act VIII. of 1859.

129. 180 applications under Section 119, Act VIII. of 1859 were disposed of during the year under report. 76 such applications were granted; the corresponding figures for 1876 being 86 applications granted out of 168 presented.

Value of suits disposed of.

130. Of the 20,889 suits disposed of in Assam during the past year, 11 only exceeded Rs. 5,000 in value, as compared with 18 in the previous year. 17,847 suits, or 85·4 per cent. of the whole, were of less than Rs. 100 in value. Of

338 cases decided in the revenue courts of the Valley districts, 6 only exceeded Rs. 100 in value, while of the rest 253 were petty suits involving a value of less than Rs. 20.

Decrees executed.

131. The following figures show the action taken in execution of decrees in the Province during the past three years:—

Year.	Completely.	Partially.	Amount realised. Rs.
1875	2,963	7,351	3,01,995
1876	2,981	8,149	2,55,459
1877	2,693	7,277	2,86,883

Of the 7,277 decrees shown as partially executed, 5,478 were cases in which the judgment creditor did not proceed, and in 1,799 cases only were partial realizations made. Including cases completely executed, the average amount realized was only Rs. 47-1, a figure much below that resulting in Bengal (Rs. 111-3). Considering the increase in the number of suits disposed of during the year, an increase in the number of applications for execution seemed probable. This followed in Sylhet and Cachar, but in the Valley districts there was a marked decrease in the number of decrees executed. The amount realized there, however, as well as in the other districts, increased considerably.

Decrees satisfied without execution.

The total number of decrees satisfied without execution in 1877 was 479, compared with 977 in 1876. The amount thus realized was Rs. 26,775 in the past, as compared with Rs. 26,416 in the previous year.

Coercive processes

132. The following table shows the number and nature of coercive processes issued in execution of decree during the past three years in all the courts in Assam :—

Year	Imprisonment of person	Moveable property.		Immoveable property.		Orders under Section 248, C. P. C.
		Attached.	Sold.	Attached.	Sold.	
1875	115	1,003	380	1,896	105	2
1876	176	1,076	415	2,395	861	1
1877	134	1,047	440	2,828	1,020	1

The number of persons imprisoned has decreased and the number of cases in which moveable property was sold has increased. The number of decrees executed by possession being given has increased slightly, the figures being 965 cases in 1877, against 926 in 1876.

Original miscellaneous cases.

133. The number of original miscellaneous cases of a judicial nature instituted, disposed of, and pending in the regular courts in Assam during the past two years were as follows:—

Year.	Instituted.	Disposed of.	Pending.
1876	2,020	2,006	293
1877	1,930	1,893	298

During the year under report cases of this class in the Province have decreased. This is due entirely to a falling off in the business of the courts in the Valley districts, there having been an increase

in Sylhet and Cachar. The disposals have not quite kept pace with the institutions, but the increase in the pending files is not material.

134. The number of cases disposed of, their distribution among courts of the several grades in the Province, and the average duration of cases during the past year were as follows:—

Courts.	Number of cases.		Average duration.			
	Contested.	Uncontested.	Contested.		Uncontested.	
			M.	D.	M.	D.
Judges	7	17	2	23	1	20
Subordinate Judges ...	233	432	2	16	1	1
Munsifs	5,747	14,453	2	8	1	8

From the above statement it appears that the cases before the Judges and Subordinate Judges were very rapidly disposed of. The duration of suits in the munsifs' courts was not unduly long. It must be remembered, however, that in Assam there are no separate small cause courts to attract away petty cases of the class which is most easily disposed of.

Small cause courts.

135. The Subordinate Judge of Sylhet is the only officer vested with small cause court powers. By virtue of them, he disposed of 455 cases, 120 of which were contested.

Appellate Jurisdiction.
Business from Assam disposed of by the High Court.

136. The business disposed of by the High Court is not very great, as shown by the following figures, indicating the number of appeals of each class filed during each of the past two years:—

	1876.	1877.
Regular appeals	8	7
Special appeals	119	121
Miscellaneous appeals	10	6

During the year under report the decision of the lower court was reversed or varied in 3 regular, 26 special, and 2 miscellaneous appeals, the whole number of each class decided on trial being 9 regular, 145 special, and 4 miscellaneous appeals.

Other appellate courts in the Province.

137. The number of appeals instituted, disposed of, and pending in the Province during the past three years, excluding the revenue courts, was as follows:—

	1875.	1876.	1877.
Instituted	1,743	1,512	1,206
Disposed of	1,461	1,617	1,327
Pending	525	431	334

The above figures indicate a large decrease in the business of the appellate courts in the Province. This decrease extended to Sylhet and Cachar, as well as to the Valley districts, but was most marked in the latter. The Judge remarks that in the Valley districts the cases are usually of a simple nature, and the grounds taken on appeal not sustainable. He finds it necessary to check frivolous applications to his court by refusing to interfere with the judgments of the lower courts, except on very good grounds.

As regards the courts of the Deputy-Commissioners, there was an increase in the number of appeals in Kámrúp, Sibságar, and Lakhimpur, and a decrease in the remaining districts. The decrease in Cachar may, as suggested by the Deputy-Commissioner, be due to a decrease in the number of original cases disposed of. A similar explanation may apply to Sylhet, where there was a decrease in the number of original suits tried on their merits.

The appellate courts having fewer cases to deal with, the pending files have been considerably reduced. In Sylhet there were four appeals of over one year's standing pending at the close of the year. These were cases remanded from the High Court, and were not ripe for decision before the new year commenced.

The ratio of appeals to original cases decided on the merits was 20·14 per cent. in the past, as compared with 23·12 per cent. in the previous year. In Sylhet, the ratio was 22·14 per cent., and in Cachar only 14·07 per cent. The great distance of the Judge's court from some of the Valley districts may be an obstacle to presenting appeals in many cases. In Cachar, however, where they are the least frequent, the Deputy-Commissioner is the District Judge.

138. The manner in which appeals decided on a hearing were disposed of is shown in the following table :—

How disposed of.	Number.		Percentage.	
	1876.	1877.	1876.	1877.
Confirmed	1,137	903	71·4	69·78
Modified	126	100	7·9	7·73
Reversed	276	255	17·3	19·7
Remanded	55	36	3·4	2·79

The proportion of cases in which the decision of the lower court was reversed has increased. In the Valley districts the ratio was 24·22 per cent., while in Sylhet it was 15·5 per cent. It is satisfactory to observe that but few cases have been remanded on appeal. In Sylhet, 1·6 per cent. only were so dealt with.

Appeals disposed of, classed, and valued.

139. The following table shows the number and value of the appeals of the several classes disposed of during the past year in the courts of the District and Subordinate Judges:—

	Small Cause Court Class.	Rent suits.	Other class.	Total. Number.	Total. Value.
					Rs.
Not exceeding Rs. 10...	60	46	91	197	1,210
Ditto „ 50...	293	38	205	536	15,122
Ditto „ 100...	165	8	103	276	20,285
Ditto „ 500...	140	7	116	263	58,220
Ditto „ 1,000...	19	...	13	32	22,744
Ditto „ 5,000...	7	...	11	18	36,790
Total { Number ...	684	99	539	1,322	.....
Total { Value Rs.	79,204	2,937	72,230	.....	1,54,371

The proportion of cases of small value is very large (76·3 per cent.) The average value of each appeal was only Rs. 116.

General and administrative work done.

140. The manner in which the original cases decided were distributed between the several grades of courts was as follows :—

	Original suits.		Miscellaneous cases.	
	1876.	1877.	1876.	1877.
Judges	16	24	554	424
Subordinate Judges.....	756	665	533	554
Munsifs	19,073	20,200	7,170	8,487

Civil Court Amins.

141. In the Valley districts of Assam Proper temporary amins only were employed during the year, and the receipts covered the expenditure. In Sylhet and Cachar, where the amins employed were permanent, the receipts amounted to Rs. 1,663 only, against Rs. 1,920, the disbursements, not including charge for pensions.

Local inquiries.

142. The number of local inquiries held in the past year was 156. The number held in the previous year was 187. The decrease has occurred chiefly in cases of small value.

Cost of Civil Courts in Assam and receipts on account of court-fees.

143. The following figures represent the receipts of the civil courts in this Province, and the proportion of costs of establishment properly debitable to civil justice:—

Year.	Receipts. Rs.	Expenditure. Rs.	Surplus Rs.
1876	2,31,963	2,28,304	3,659
1877	2,33,925	2,06,837	27,088

In the Report for 1876, it was shown that the expenditure of the civil courts largely exceeded the receipts. The contrary result, arrived at in the above table, is due to a deduction of two-thirds of the charges, as representing roughly the proportion of cost debitable to other than the Civil Department. For 1877, as explained above, a share of the cost only, proportionate to the time devoted to civil judicial duties, has been treated as a charge. In the figures for both years a share of the salary of the Judge of Sylhet has been treated as expenditure.

The surplus shown for 1877 is considerably greater than that for 1876, but the figures for the latter year, it will be observed, are approximate only. The fact may be accepted, however, that, as a whole, the civil courts in Assam are self-supporting.

Ratio of suits to population.

144. The ratio of civil suits to population in the Province during the year under report was ·5 per cent., it was greatest (·9 per cent.) in Cachar, and least (·3 per cent.) in the Valley districts.

The New Code of Civil Procedure came into force late in the year under report.

SECTION 7.—REGISTRATION.

145. The following table shows the work done by, and the financial position of, the Registration Department in this Province during the year under review, as compared with the year 1876-77:—

1	2		3				4				5	
District.	Total number of registrations.		Receipts.				Expenditure.				Percentage of column 4 on column 3.	
	1876-77.	1877-78.	1876-77.			1877-78.		1876-77.		1877-78.	1876-77.	1877-78.
			Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs.	A. P.	Rs. A. P.		
Cachar	1,907	2,036	1,968	9	9	1,772	5 0	1,785	5 4	1,732 15 10	90·7	97·8
Sylhet	4,713	6,804	9,412	0	6	11,056	0 4	6,942	11 6	6,857 15 11	63·1	62·0
Goálpára	788	2,096	888	0	0	1,963	11 0	1,160	2 1	1,732 6 5	130·6	88·2
Kámrúp	557	535	928	15	0	802	9 0	1,026	14 8	1,061 1 1	110·5	132·2
Darrang	65	92	292	3	0	272	8 9	387	11 5	350 10 8	132·6	128·6
Nowgong	291	328	631	5	6	772	2 0	502	8 0	676 4 10	89·7	87·5
Sibságar	652	821	865	4	0	1,503	4 0	765	4 1	1,275 15 0	88·4	84·9
Lakhimpur	81	110	216	0	0	284	6 0	113	13 6	213 3 8	52·7	75·0
Total	9,004	12,342	15,202	5	9	18,426	14 1	11,684	6 7	13,900 9 0	76·8	75·4
Office of Officer in Charge of Registration Department.	....	....	.....			3	0 0	796	4 3	1,908 3 8	....	....
Grand Total	9,004	12,342	15,202	5	9	18,429	14 1	12,480	10 10	15,808 12 8	82·9	85·8

It will be seen from the above statement that in 1877-78, 12,342 documents were registered, as compared with 9,004 documents registered in 1876-77, and that the receipts during the year under review exceeded the receipts during the preceding year by Rs. 3,224-8-4. The expenditure likewise exceeded that of 1876-77 by Rs. 2,216-2-5.

There was a very remarkable increase in the total number of registrations, amounting to 37 per cent. In each district except Kámrúp, a greater number of documents were registered than in 1876-77, which is a very encouraging sign. In the districts of Sylhet and Goálpára, the increase was very marked, in fact, in the latter district the number of registrations was nearly trebled. In the year 1876-77, there were three deficit districts. In the year under review there were two such districts only. Omitting the charges incurred in the office of the Officer in Charge of the Registration Department, the percentage of expenditure upon receipts fell from 76·8 to 75·4; but, on the whole, there has been an improvement in the financial position of the department. Under the new table of fees recently sanctioned by the Governor-General in Council a still further improvement is anticipated.

146. The following synopsis of Registration Form II. shows a very marked increase, more than 54 per cent., in the number of compulsory registrations, as compared with the year 1876-77; this increase is mainly

due to the numerous registrations of leases in the districts of Sylhet and Goálpára:—

Year.	Compulsory registrations.	Optional registrations. Affecting immoveable property.	Optional registrations. Affecting moveable property.	Wills and authorities to adopt.	Total.
1876-77	4,981	2,411	1,529	83	9,004
1877-78	7,693	2,790	1,783	76	12,342
Comparison	+2,712	+379	+254	—7	+3,338

147. The aggregate value of property transferred by documents brought to the several offices for registration was considerably more during the year under review than in the preceding year, as will appear from the following statement:—

District.	Total aggregate value. 1876-77.	Total aggregate value. 1877-78.	Increase or decrease.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Cachar	3,47,885	3,42,320	—5,563
Sylhet	14,09,773	21,05,555	+6,95,782
Goalpara	1,07,809	1,77,092	+69,283
Kámrup	2,61,046	1,83,497	—77,549
Darrang	47,237	45,904	—1,333
Nowgong	2,46,819	3,92,141	+1,45,322
Sibságar	3,59,029	7,27,813	+3,68,884
Lakhimpur	69,949	1,50,968	+81,019
Total	28,49,547	41,25,320	+12,75,773

148. The miscellaneous work of the department during the year 1877-78, as compared with the previous year, is shown in the following statement:—

Year.	Wills deposited.	Powers of attorney authenticated. General.	Powers of attorney authenticated. Special.	Registrations on payment of fine under Section 34.	Registrations on payment of fine under Section 34.	Applications for searches and copies.	Proclamations Section 52.
1876-77	...	193	278	47	76	402	4
1877-78	2	180	256	52	100	437	.....

The receipts on account of miscellaneous operations amounted to Rs. 7,209, against Rs. 6,513 in 1876-77.

149. No change was made during the year in the number of registration offices at head-quarter stations and sub-divisions. Of the rural offices, that at Karimganj was abolished from the 1st June, 1877. From the same date an experimental office was opened at Ratabari, in Sylhet, for the convenience of some influential planters living in the vicinity; but it was found that in the first two months of its existence only 23 documents were presented for registration, and the office was consequently closed on the 1st September following. A new rural office was opened in March, 1878, at Rajnagar, with jurisdiction over thanahs Rajnagar and Hingajiya.

As far as the Chief Commissioner can at present judge, there is no call for the extension of the rural sub-registry system in this Province.

150. No prosecutions were instituted under the Registration Act during the year under report.

151. There was a very marked increase during the year in the number of marriage contracts registered, as compared with the previous year. The registration of these deeds is entirely confined to the Surmá Valley districts. Deeds of divorce are confined to Sylhet. There was a slight increase during the year in this class of documents. Considering the number of cases relating to marriage which come before the courts in this country, and the difficulty of producing legal evidence of marriage, any increase in the number of marriage contracts registered is to be regarded with satisfaction.

152. The Registration Department was instrumental in bringing to light during the year a large number of documents which were insufficiently stamped. In the Sylhet district alone 45 documents were impounded.

SECTION 8.—MUNICIPALITIES.

153. The number of municipal institutions in the Province was increased by one during the year under report: the station of Dibrugarh having been declared a township under Act VI. of 1868 (B.C.) from the commencement of the year. These institutions are now as follows:—

Gauháti.—Originally a Municipality under Act III. (B.C.) of 1864; now a first-class Municipality under Act V. (B.C.) of 1876.

Goálpára, Dibrugarh, and Sylhet.—Originally Towns under Act VI. (B.C.) of 1868; now second-class Municipalities under Act V. (B.C.) of 1876.

Silchar.—Originally a Chaukidari Union under Act XX. of 1856; now a Union under Act V. (B.C.) of 1876.

154. In all other sadar and sub-divisional stations in the Assam Valley (except Dhubri, the extension to which of the Municipal Act is under the Chief Commissioner's consideration) there is a fund called

the Town Improvement Fund, the receipts of which are derived from a grant made from Imperial Funds, as a specific addition to the Provincial assignment, in lieu of the revenue of the town mouzahs, which used formerly to be assigned for town improvements. This Fund is at the disposal of the Civil Officers, and not of a Committee.

155. The small extent, and smaller commercial importance, of towns in Assam can be best understood from the fact that the whole receipts of the regular municipalities under all heads, including unexpended balance of previous year, amounted to only Rs. 1,00,931-6-2. In the previous year, the total income was Rs. 82,188-8-7, showing an increase of Rs. 18,742-13-7. This increase is chiefly due to the transactions of the town of Dibrugarh, which were hitherto treated under Town Improvement Fund, having been shown during the current year under Municipalities.

The expenditure of the year amounted to Rs. 60,090-11-5, as compared with Rs. 58,739-12-2 during 1876-77. The details of expenditure are best reviewed by taking the towns separately.

156. In Goálpára, the receipts of the year amounted to Rs. 4,986 and the expenditure to Rs. 3,716, as against Rs. 4,134 originally estimated to be received and expended. The apparent increase in receipts is due to the omission of the opening balance from the original estimate, whereas there was actually a balance of Rs. 1,053. The actual receipts of the year fell somewhat short of the estimated amount. The short expenditure does not call for any comment. The Chairman observes in his Report that the limited funds at the disposal of the Commissioners do not allow of any large works being undertaken, but that the duties of maintenance, conservancy, and police were properly carried out.

Goálpára.

From a census taken in March last, it appears that there is a population of 5,946 within municipal limits, and the incidence of actual taxation per head is 10 annas 4 pie, while that calculated on the total receipts, including opening balance, is 10 annas 6 pie.

157. In Gauháti, the receipts, including the unexpended balance of previous year, amounted to Rs. 24,823, and the expenditure to Rs. 23,982, as against Rs. 23,640 and Rs. 22,958, originally estimated for. Here, again, no opening balance had been shown in the original estimate of receipts, which accounts for nearly the whole of the increase under this head. The excess in expenditure is chiefly under the head "Miscellaneous."

Gauháti.

This expenditure is chiefly due to the cost of coolies maintained by the Municipality, and supplied on payment to private parties for such purposes of conservancy as cleaning compounds, &c. The difficulty of obtaining labour in Assam is said to render such a system necessary. The expenditure on this account is all recovered from the people to whom the coolies are supplied, and the recoveries are shown in the accounts as miscellaneous receipts. This system has the objection of exaggerating the revenue and expenditure of the municipality, but it is open to question whether the transfer of such expenditure to a subsidiary suspense account would not be equally objectionable in other respects.

During the year two new serais were built, some new roads opened and others metalled, and the maintenance and conservancy of the town were generally attended to. There is, however, much to be done before the conservancy of the town can be deemed even moderately satisfactory. Towards the close of the year a steamer was built to order in the Government Dockyard at Calcutta for ferry purposes, but it was not paid for, and its cost will have to be spread over the current and next year. The toll collected at the steam-ferry during the first month it worked was Rs. 605.

The incidence per head of population, calculated on the income from taxation, was 13 annas 5 pie, but it must be remembered that more than half of this income is derived from ferries, and that a great portion of the ferry-tolls are paid by people living beyond municipal limits.

Dibrugarh.

158. In Dibrugarh, the receipts, including the unexpended balance of previous year, amounted to Rs. 19,131, and the expenditure to Rs. 5,711. No regular estimate for the Dibrugarh Town Fund was sanctioned. Act VI. (B.C.) of 1868, was only extended to the town on 1st April, 1877, and a budget had previously been sanctioned for the Town Improvement Fund of the whole district of Lakhimpur. This being the first year of the municipality, it was not possible to carry out work to the full extent proposed. But the conservancy of the town was attended to, and several projects for improving the town were taken into consideration. At present, both the town roads and the conservancy arrangements are in a lamentably backward state. It is hoped that in a short time considerable progress may be made in town improvements.

The incidence per head of population of actual taxation was 3 annas 9 pie.

Sylhet.

159. The receipts of the year of the township of Sylhet, including the unexpended balance of previous years, amounted to Rs. 26,410, and the expenditure to Rs. 13,866, as compared with Rs. 17,472 originally estimated to be received and expended. No opening balance was included in the original estimate of receipts, which omission accounts for Rs. 5,145 of the increase under "Receipts."

The receipts under all heads of income were in excess of the amounts estimated, the increase under "Ferries" amounting to over Rs. 3,500, as compared with the income of 1876-77. There is a great increase under the head "House-tax," due to a revised assessment.

The incidence per head of population of actual taxation was Re. 1-3-4; but here again more than half of the receipts from taxation is due to ferry-tolls, of which only a small portion is paid by the inhabitants of the town.

The short expenditure of the year is chiefly under "Public Works," and is due to some of the metalling provided for not having been done for want of materials. Some metalling was, however, done, and existing roads were properly maintained. Some revision of the boundaries of the town appear to be necessary, and are under con-

sideration. The constitution of the Committee was not in accordance with the Act, and a revised Committee has been appointed since the close of year.

Silchar.

160. In Silchar the receipts amounted to Rs. 25,579, and the expenditure to Rs. 12,781, as compared with Rs. 21,782 and Rs. 12,190 originally estimated for. Rs. 16,900 of the receipts are due to the opening balance, and the actual income of the year was only Rs. 8,679. The balance has, therefore, been reduced by about Rs. 4,900, Rs. 3,000 of which were expended on improving communications in the neighbourhood of Silchar. The roads in the station were repaired and re-metalled, and are now in fair condition, and a good deal was done to improve drainage. A new police thannah and pound were built, and a contribution was made towards the construction of a serai.

The conservancy of the town was attended to, and land was purchased for a new latrine. The incidence per head of population, calculated on the income from taxation amounting to Rs. 7,513, was Rs. 2-0-2; but under the head of "Taxation" are included receipts from ferries (Rs. 3,135), mela (Rs. 935), sale of bazaar lands (Rs. 1,100), fisheries (Rs. 78), which can hardly be regarded as taxation. The incidence of actual taxation is very small.

161. From these remarks, it will be seen that no works of importance were carried out during the year, but the general duties of maintenance and conservancy were attended to. The Chief Commissioner considers that there is still much room for improvement in the administration of Municipal funds. During the current year the Bengal Consolidated Municipal Act (Act V. of 1876) has been extended to Assam, and it is hoped that the very clear rulings therein laid down as to the duties and powers of the Commissioners will be attended to.

It may be noticed that in most of the Municipalities the amount expended on conservancy bears a very small proportion to the total expenditure. In the small thinly-populated towns of Assam it is not possible to have elaborate conservancy arrangements such as are essential in larger cities. A good deal of the money included under the head of "Maintenance and repair of roads" is expended in clearing side drains, &c.; and in Assam there is nothing of more importance than ensuring that the rainfall is allowed to drain off properly. Other sanitary requirements of towns, such as a good water-supply, &c., are beyond the means of the present municipalities of Assam, but the Chief Commissioner believes that due attention is paid to the cleaning of tanks.

SECTION 9.—MILITARY.

162. The distribution of the military force in the Province during the year is shown in the annexed statement:—

Regiment.	Stations.		Strength.	
	Head-quarters.	Outposts.	British Officers.	Natives of all ranks.
35th Native Infantry	Cachar	Cachar	8	504
		Monierkhal ...	.....	50
		Noarbund.....	.....	40
		Manipur	.....	92
42nd Assam Light Infantry ...	Shillong	.....	6	648
		Samaguting...	.....	52
		Jowai	.....	50
		Alinagar	.....	47
		Chargola	.....	49
43rd " Ditto ditto ...	Dibrugarh ...	.....	4	621
		Sadiya	1	125
		Pobamukh ...	.....	46
		Sesri	.....	24
		Dibong	.....	14
		Wokha	1	59
44th Sylhet Light Infantry ...	Shillong	.....	5	483
		Gauháti	2	247
		Tezpur	.....	113
		Oodalguri	.....	59

Movements.

163. The relief of the local regiments having been carried out during the cold season of 1877-78, the following change of stations took place: The 42nd Assam Light Infantry moved up from Gauháti to Shillong; the 43rd Assam Light Infantry moved up from Shillong to Dibrugarh; and the 44th Sylhet Light Infantry moved down from Dibrugarh to Gauháti. Gauháti having been given up as a head-quarters station owing to its unhealthiness, the head-quarters of the 44th Sylhet Light Infantry moved up to Shillong leaving a half battalion at Gauháti.

Field operations.

164. A detachment of the 44th Sylhet Light Infantry, strength 41 Natives of all ranks, marched from Golághát on the 13th July, 1877, for Samaguting, to reinforce the police at that station, a movement necessitated by the hostile attitude of the Nágas. A punitive expedition under the command of Captain Brydon, 42nd Assam Light Infantry, consisting of two British officers and 210 fighting men of that regiment, with 236 non-combatants (75 hospital attendants, 156 coolies, and 5 servants), proceeded from Gauháti on the 19th November, 1877, for the Nága Hills. This detachment attacked and captured the village of Mozemah, against which the movement was directed.

A reinforcement of 100 men of the 43rd Assam Light Infantry, under the command of Lieutenant Macgregor, 44th Sylhet Light Infantry, left Dibrugarh for Mozemah upon the 27th December, 1877.

The Manipur detachment, increased to 92 fighting men, under the orders of the Political Agent at Manipur, marched early in January from Manipur, to make a demonstration in the rear of the hostile Nágas.

The Golághát detachment, increased to fifty men, under Captain Beresford, 43rd Assam Light Infantry, proceeded to Wokha to co-operate with Captain Brydon's force, and, if necessary, to check any demonstrations from the Nága tribes in that direction.

The refractory villages having given in their submission, and having paid the fines imposed upon them, the force was withdrawn, Wokha being permanently occupied as an outpost, and a force of fifty men being left at Samaguting as a precautionary measure for the present.

A detachment of the 44th Sylhet Light Infantry, consisting of 25 men under a Native Officer, was despatched on 20th November, 1877, from Dibrugarh to Lakhimpur, as an escort for the survey party, proceeding up the Subansiri Valley under Lieutenants Woodthorpe and Harman.

A detachment of the 43rd Assam Light Infantry, consisting of 40 men, was despatched from Dibrugarh in January, 1878, to escort the survey party under the command of Lieutenants Woodthorpe and Harman up the Valley of the Brahmaputra north-east of Sadiya.

No collision with the hill tribes took place.

Outposts.

165. New stockades have been constructed at Wokha, Alinagar, and Chargola during the year under review, the stockades of Alinagar and Chargola being moved some few miles further south.

Nowgong was given up as a military station, as also was Golághát.

The outposts of Mainadahar and Jirighat were also given up on account of their extreme unhealthiness.

CHAPTER IV.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION.

SECTION 1.—WEATHER AND CROPS.

166. THE weather throughout the year under review was, generally speaking, favourable for agricultural operations. The *Sali* and *Aus* rice crops gave a fair outturn, and the other crops, such as jute, mustard, sugarcane, pulse, &c., were fairly good.

The Province was not visited by any cyclone, severe storm, or inundation, with the exception of the southern portion of Sylhet, where a storm caused some damage to the crops and houses.

In some districts the *Sali* crop suffered partially, owing to the unseasonable rainfall; but, on the other hand, the *Aus* crop was abundant, and no distress was experienced. The high prices of the previous year continued, however, to prevail during the year under report. The famine in Southern and Western India was probably, as regards the Surmá Valley at least, the cause of the continuation of these high prices. As, however, increased facilities of communication tend to cause increased exportation of food-grains, it is extremely doubtful if the prices of these grains will ever fall to their former level.

167. The following statement shows the rainfall registered in each district of the Province during the years 1875, 1876, and 1877.

Stations.		1875.	1876.	1877.	Average of preceding six years.
Surmá Valley Districts.					
Sylhet	Sylhet	183·79	150·73	158·23	157·83
Cachar	Silchar	132·53	141·62	128·03	118·94
	Háilákándi	104·78	100·47	94·92	100·57
Brahmaputra Valley Districts.					
Goálpára	Goálpára	97·57	87·89	80·30	92·47
	Dhubri	91·64	94·50	68·95	93·15
Kámrúp	Gauháti	54·88	65·86	56·66	60·71
	Barpetá	96·06	113·22	75 88	97·61
Darrang	Tezpur	84·03	58·15	73·03	74·05
	Mangaldai	66·22	64·67	50·02	65·59
Nowgong	Nowgong	69·59	63·90	54·91	90·62
	Sibságar	103·28	83·73	92·60	101·87

		1876.	1877.	Average of preceding six years.
	....	84·54	70·27	74·77	81·88
	.....	79·24	76 81	78·59	80·10
	.....	104·29	106·97	109·00	110·28
Lakhimpur	mpur.....	140·07	117·11	132·46	120·02*
	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
	.....	.....	.....	108·03	.....
	Hill Districts.				
Khási and Jaintia Hills.	Shillong.....	100 21	98·00	104·53	83·98
	Cherra Poonjee	321 15	468·67	362·86‡	397·05
	Jowai	241·66	307·32	361·66	169·23
Gáro Hills	Tura	119·70	98·33	111·53	109·53
Nága Hills.....	Samaguting	69·07	53 76	73·51	53·43

* Average of four years. † No record. ‡ Since 20th April, 1877.

From this statement it will be observed that the rainfall during the year in the Brahmaputra Valley was below the average, while, on the whole, in the Surmá Valley and in the hill districts the fall was above the average.

In the plains districts the rains set in later than usual, and the crops suffered to some extent in consequence; but in the hill districts the reverse was the case, the crops suffering somewhat from excessive rain early in the year.

168. The condition of the people is described as generally prosperous. The prices of food-grains and other agricultural produce fluctuated but little during the year.

169. The accompanying table gives the average monthly rate in each district of rice, which may be taken as the standard staple :—

Districts.	Average quantities of rice per rupee during the year 1877-78.												
	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	January.	February.	March.	
	S. C.	S. C.	S. C.	S. C.	S. C.	S. C.	S. C.	S. C.	S. C.	S. C.	S. C.	S. C.	S. C.
Sylhet.....	21 8	24 8	24 8	23 3	16 14	17 12	15 0	20 0	20 0	18 12	17 0	12 6	
Cachar.....	22 8	21 9	19 12	18 8	16 14	16 12	14 8	16 0	17 8	16 8	15 3	12 8	
Goálpára.....	20 8	20 9	19 4	15 9	14 0	14 0	14 8	15 0	17 12	16 6	16 0	16 4	
Kámrúp	13 8	16 12	15 8	13 0	13 0	13 4	11 0	16 0	17 8	15 0	16 8	13 0	
Darrang	11 0	11 0	11 0	11 0	11 0	11 0	9 12	11 0	10 12	11 1	11 8	11 2	
Nowgong	14 0	14 0	13 4	13 0	13 0	13 4	12 0	16 0	16 0	16 0	16 0	15 0	
Sibságar	12 0	11 0	9 8	9 4	7 8	7 4	8 12	10 0	8 12	11 13	14 0	13 8	
Lakhimpur	11 0	11 0	11 0	10 12	10 0	10 0	10 0	9 0	11 4	11 0	11 0	10 4	
Khási Hills	11 0	11 3	11 0	11 0	9 9	9 10	6 6	10 0	10 0	-	8 6	7 8	
.....	16 0	16 6	14 0	14 0	12 8	12 8	10 4	14 0	17 0	12 6	12 0	9 8	
	8 0	8 9	9 0	9 0	8 0	8 0	8 0	8 0	8 0	8 0	8 0	8 0	

SECTION 2.—AGRICU

170. The cultivation at the F
year, almost entirely confined to expe
and oats. As in former years considerabl
in getting these cereals reaped and threshed
the elevation of the farm, 5,500 feet, ex
directed to be made on the left bank of the U
river is crossed by the Gauhati and Shillong ca
of about 4,000 feet.

The sowings made in the autumn of 1877 at the Umiam were, however, a comparative failure, owing to the poverty of the soil and the want of manure. On the other hand, the results of the sowings of these cereals at the Shillong Farm were very much better than in former years, owing to the increased fertility of the soil consequent upon the application of manure year by year. The experience gained from these sowings during the last four years shows that wheat and barley will grow much better at an elevation of 4,000 feet than at a higher elevation, while oats do well at from 4,000 to 5,500 feet. But, whatever the elevation, the soil in these localities requires to be richly manured, and the land to be hoed or ploughed when the soil is comparatively dry, before success can be obtained. Sowing should be commenced in the beginning of October. The seed which has been found best suited for these hills is the seed grown at the farm from Sealkote stock. Some seed-grain, barley, wheat, and oats, was distributed among several of the Khási Seims, but they paid no attention to the instructions they received, and, consequently, the sowings made by them proved a failure.

A few vegetables were grown at the farm during the year. They were readily disposed of at remunerative prices.

The English potatoes sown did very well, but only one crop was obtained. The older variety of potato acclimatized in these hills yields two crops in the year, and is, for this reason, preferred by the cultivators.

The growth of the fruit-trees has been vigorous. They are intended as stock plants to graft from.

171. No purchases of live-stock were made during the year. The stock kept at the farm consisted of—

Nansi bulls	2
„ calves	3
„ cow	1
Bhutia bull	1
Khási cows	14
„ bullocks	3
„ calves	20
English ram	1
Neyaulese sheep	25
„ lambs	6

The Khásias cannot be induced to breed sheep as sheep require too much attention. One ram